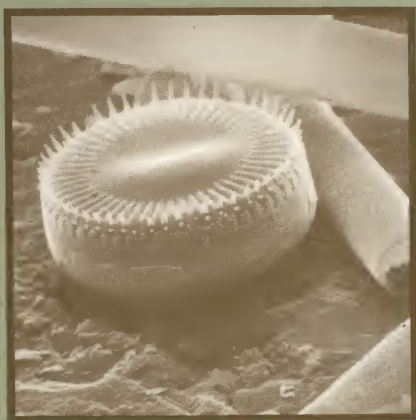
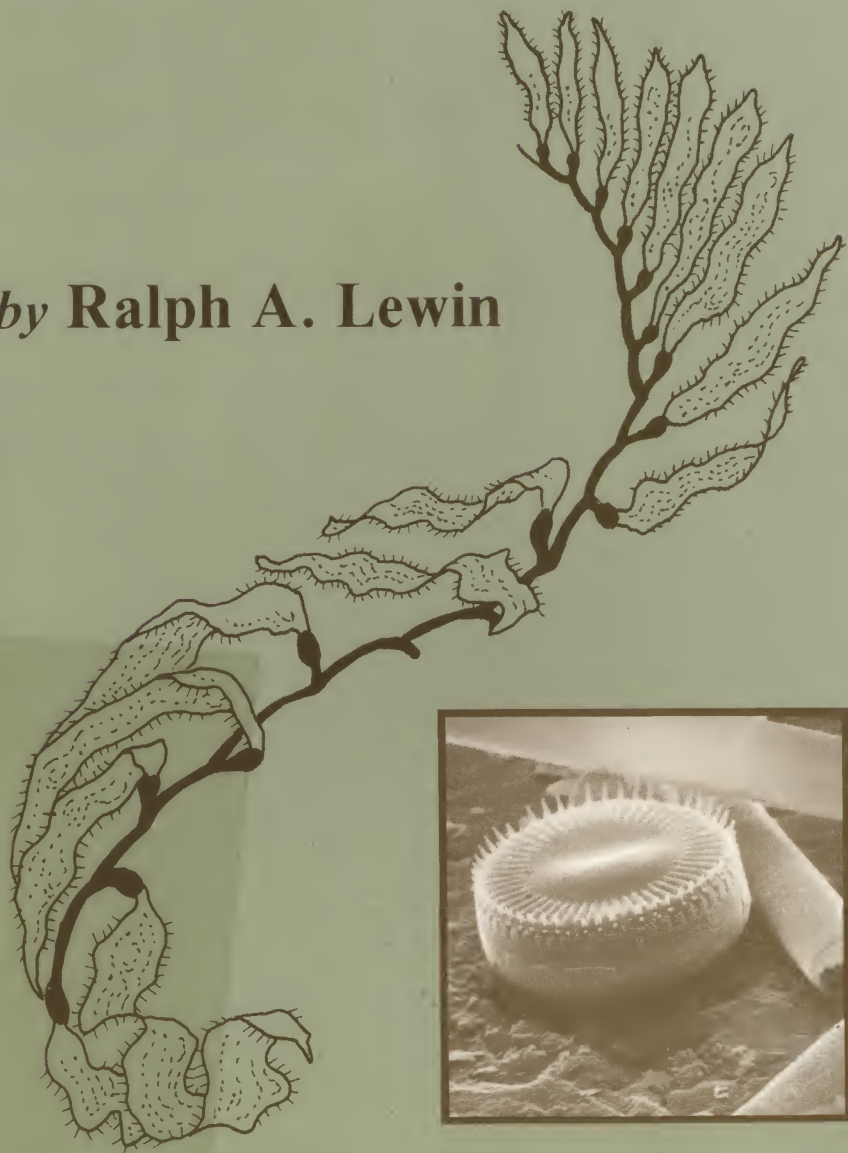


*The  
Biology of Algae  
and  
Diverse Other Verses*

by Ralph A. Lewin



When men are short of science,  
they stretch to Poetry.

—*Charles Darwin*

\* \* \*

. . . his poetry's made up of botany  
and wide margins and indecency  
in about equal proportions.

—*James Branch Cabell*

**The Biology of Algae**  
**and**  
**Diverse Other Verses**

**by**  
Ralph A. Lewin

THE BOXWOOD PRESS

©1987

by

The Boxwood Press

No part of this book may be reproduced  
in any form without written permission  
of the Copyright owner.

Distributed by:

The Boxwood Press  
183 Ocean View Blvd.  
Pacific Grove, CA 93950  
*408—375-9110*

ISBN: 0-940168-11-1

Printed in U.S.A.

*Quid pro quo*

By some supreme reciprocating plan,  
Our God created mountain-tops and trees,  
Fossils and fishes, animals and man—  
And we created fables such as these.

## PREFACE

Most of my other publications are shorter than this one. They generally begin with a *Summary*, and proceed through an *Introduction* to sections on *Materials and Methods*, *Results*, *Discussion*, *Acknowledgments*, and *Bibliography*. For this book, compiled from similar elements but presented in a less formal manner, there can be no general *Summary*, and I cannot hope to write a satisfactory Introduction.

The reader is invited to start on page one and to go on browsing through the verses until he gets hungry or bored, or the 'phone rings.

—*Ralph A. Lewin*

La Jolla, California  
January 1978

\* \* \*

## PREFACE TO REVISED and EXPANDED EDITION

Ten years (almost) have passed and I have accumulated some odd thoughts and made notes here and there, which like the ones in the first edition, do not lend themselves to the formal construction of true science. So the old ones, integrated with the new ones, are presented here with the same suggestion to browse through until something happens in the society that could be more important.

—*Ralph A. Lewin*

La Jolla, California  
December 1987

# CONTENTS

## Protists (including Algae)

The Biology of Algae ...	1
In the Beginning ...	2
My Ladye, Green Weeds ...	4
A Mournful Roundelay ...	5
Folksong About Moonshine * Assimilation or Something ...	6
Lead Kindly, Stromatolite ...	9
The Amebas ...	10

## Plants

The Emerald Crystal Ball ...	13
Kastanienbaum ...	14
Linum and Melampsora ...	15
The Grass of No-Man's Land ...	16
Weeds * The Politics of Conservation ...	17
Roses * The Dendrochronomisogynist * Epilogue to <i>The Daffodils</i> by Wordsworth ...	18
Steep Daisies ...	19
The Flowers ...	20
The Cherry Tree ...	21
Sakura-no-shi ...	22
The Lily ...	23
Jequirity Beans ...	24
The Poison Ivy ...	25
Blindness in Early Summer Cauliflower ...	26

## Monerans and Fungi

Keep It Clean! ...	27
You Wait! ...	28
The Strain and the Bond ...	29
Le Fermentation ...	30
The Gay Amanita ...	31

## **Birds**

- Bobolinks ... 63  
The Birds of Bedford Manor ... 64  
Conversation Under an Oriole's Nest in Vermont ... 65  
A Lesson in Ornithology ... 66  
The Trials of the Ptarmigan ... 67  
The Oiled Swan ... 68  
Sea-Pie \* The Stormy Petrels ... 69  
The Tern ... 70  
Lament for a Dead Sea-Bird ... 72  
Love \* The Honey-eater ... 73

## **Mammals ... 74**

- Lesser Breeds? \* The Coolidge Effect ... 75  
The Rat Race ... 76  
Gracia primaе vesperi Februariae \* How! or America  
the Problematical \* 77  
Kine \* The Fossil Pigs of Florisbad ... 78  
Expression ... 79  
The Stag at Bay ... 80  
Elks, Whelks, and Their Ilk ... 81  
The Decline of the Unicorn ... 82  
Ode to a Doe ... 84  
Sonnet—on the Greening of the Bears ... 85  
Down in the Reeds by the River ... 86  
Sea otters ... 87  
Ottery ... 88  
The Golf Lynx ... 89  
The Purple Poodle \* The Old Dog ... 90  
Dolphins and Borborygms ... 91  
Shanty ... 92  
Ches nous \* Bat's-eye View ... 94  
A Whale ... 95  
The Watchers ... 96  
Loris and Young ... 97



## **Worms, Molluscs, and Crustaceans**

Wormsong ...	33
Quissett Sands ...	34
Limax ...	35
Snail ...	36
Calvary ...	37
Swansong ...	38
Relativity: Or Watch Out, You! ...	39
Song of the Winkles ...	40
The Hermit ...	41
Opabinia ...	42
Sapphirina ...	43

## **Insects and Arachnids**

Hanging Gardens * Requiescant in Pace ...	45
The Locusts and the Ants ...	46
I Am Kind to Animals ...	47
Butterflies * Femmes Fatales ...	49
Elixir of Love and Longevity ...	50
My Heart's in the Highlands ...	51
Skater's Waltz ...	52
The Thoughtful Naturalist ...	53
Arachne * Group Selection ...	54

## **Cold Blooded Vertebrates**

Amor vincit omnia ...	55
Fishes' Eyes * Lantern Fish ...	56
A Beg for Toads ...	57
O, Tua Tara! ...	58
Coral Snake ...	59
Nessie ...	60
Saurians ...	61

### **Somewhat Scientific Subjects**

- Dross ... 99  
Dust ... 100  
Instant McBroth ... 101  
Us, the People \* Bushes and Ladders ... 102  
The Gels ... 103  
Anoa ... 104  
The Plumed Serpent ... 105  
Whose Necks? ... 106  
Relative Speeds ... 107  
Study Interred ... 108  
I Am a Brother to Dragons, and a Companion to Owls ... 109  
The Cleaners \* The Worried Axolotl ... 110  
Unions Mendelian and Morganatic ... 111  
The Ultimate End of the Grollux ... 112  
The Abominable Snowman ... 113

### **Medical**

- My Nervous System \* Neuroses ... 115  
The Middle Way \* Chewing Gums ... 116  
The Inward Eye \* Minnehaha -Passing Water ... 117  
Sweetmeat ... 118  
A Spell for Hallow E'en ... 119  
The Hunter ... 120  
Song of the Med. School Alumnus ... 121

### **Religion**

- Good King Wence ... 123  
Leda and the Swan ... 124  
Perfect Faith (a Moral Tale) ... 126  
His Aim ... 127  
Planning ... 128  
Black Smoke, White Smoke \* Lamentations I, 12 ... 129  
Accommodation--a Carol ... 130  
For a Sarcophagus ... 131

## **England**

- Thoughts on Picking My Way Across London ... 133  
View from the Backs of Kings \* Epitaph: To Elizabeth ... 134  
A Fantasy of Albion ... 135  
The Intelligence Man ... 136  
The Bear and Ragged Staff \* A.G.M. ... 137  
In the Faculty Club Lounge ... 138  
“The Severn Boar” at Ten ... 139

## **America**

- Color Me Butter Yellow ... 141  
On Capitol Hill, the Day After Southey ... 142  
The Paradox of Democracy \* P.R. ... 143  
America the Beautiful ... 144  
Hymn for the Table at Thanksgiving ... 145  
Carol—Christmas 1986 ... 146  
Lullaby For a Veep ... 148

## **China**

- Chinese New Year Song ... 149  
On Seeking Greener Pastures ... 150  
Seen From the Shanghai Train ... 151  
Liu and I ... 152  
An Evening by the Huang-he-lou ... 153  
Heptameters Inscribed on China ... 154

## **Other Nations**

- Other Nations, Other Ways ... 157  
Wasserklosett ... 158  
How We Bring the Good News, South from Gdansk  
and Gdover \* Mystery ... 159  
The Hmong \* I.M. ... 160  
The Sultan and the Princess ... 161  
The Sultan of Oman ... 162  
Opec All You Faithful ... 163  
Cargoes ... 164

## **Flights into Space**

- Flight Take-off \* Distaff and Shuttle ... 165  
Airborne ... 166  
It All Depends on One's Attitude ... 167  
The Wanderers \* Orbits ... 168  
Eccentric Orbits \* Noises OPH ... 169

## **Academe and Miscellanea**

- U.C.S.D. ... 171  
College Bookstore \* Approximation ... 172  
Lord Chancellor's Song ... 173  
Orlando's Choice \* Fragment (after Spenser) ... 174  
Sigh No More Ladies \* Brrr - Brr - Brr ... 175  
Skinny Ginnies ... 176  
Sheets (After Keats) ... 177  
The Prince of Pees \* Keepers ... 178  
Summer Mood ... 179  
If ... 180  
Yes, Virginia—There is An Easter Bunny... 181

## **Conferences and Expeditions**

- E pluribus tedium ... 183  
Forty Yards On ... 184  
Epitaph for a Phascolarctus ... 185  
Caveat emptor porcellorum ... 186  
The Old Phytologists ... 188  
Epitaph ... 189

## **Appendix**

- Mi estas kompleza al bestoj: nokta epizodo ... 191



*The Biology of Algae* \*

The biology of algae is a duty, or a task,  
That consumes the better portion of your time  
In the sampling of waters from an ocean, or a flask,  
Or a snow-field, or a gutter-full of slime.  
You get cold, and wet, and grubby; you get dusty, hot, and dry;  
You get dismal, and dejected, and defied;  
But you'll find that, if you're lucky—if you're good—and if you try,  
You can do a little science on the side.

The biology of algae is a pastime, or an art,  
That embodies a diversity of skill:  
How to mend a pH meter which has somehow come apart,  
Or to regulate a microscope or still;  
How to edit a proposal, or a chapter of a book;  
How to float upon the academic tide;  
How to teach a fellow creature how to speak, or how to cook,  
And a little bit of science on the side.

The biology of algae is a virtue, or a vice,  
That entails some tricky searching of the soul.  
It involves the growth of fishes, and the harvesting of rice,  
And pollution, and the origins of coal.  
It may get us into trouble; it may get us into space;  
Its dilemmas are as long as they are wide.  
It involves some moral judgements on the future of our race—  
And a little bit of science on the side.

\* R. A. L. 1971. *Phycol. Newsletter* 7:1.

*In the beginning* \*

In the beginning the earth was all wet;  
We hadn't got life—or ecology—yet.  
There were lava and rocks—quite a lot of them both—  
And oceans of nutrient Oparin broth.  
But then there arose, at the edge of the sea,  
Where sugars and organic acids were free,  
A sort of a blob in a kind of a coat—  
The earliest protero-prokaryote.  
It grew and divided: it flourished and fed;  
From puddle to puddle it rapidly spread  
Until it depleted the ocean's store  
And nary an acid was found any more.

Now, if one considered that terrible trend,  
One might have predicted that that was the end—  
But no! In some sunny wee lochan or slough  
Appeared a new creature—we cannot say how.  
By some strange transition that nobody knows,  
A photosynthetical alga arose.  
It grew and it flourished where nothing had been  
Till much of the land was a blue shade of green  
And bubbles of oxygen started to rise  
Throughout the world's oceans, and filled up the skies;  
While, off in the antediluvian mists,  
Arose a few species with heterocysts  
Which, by a procedure which no-one can tell,  
Fixed gaseous nitrogen into the cell.

As the gases turned on and the gases turned off,  
There emerged a respiring young heterotroph.  
It grew in its turn, and it lived and it throve,  
Creating fine structure, genetics, and love,  
And, using its enzymes and oxygen-2,  
Produced such fine creatures as *coli* and you.

\* R. A. L. 1977. *Biologist* (J. Inst. Biol.) 24:10.

This, then, is the story of life's evolution  
From Oparin broth to the final solution.  
So, prokaryologists, dinna forget:  
We've come a long way since the world was all wet.  
We owe a great deal—you can see from these notes--  
To photosynthetical prokaryotes.

*My Ladye, Green Weeds*

O, I have labour'd late and long  
    Researching in phycology,  
And I must sing in simple song  
    My ladye, Chlorophyceae.

    Green weeds are all my joy  
        And green weeds are my delight.  
    Green weeds are my latest toy—  
        My lovely algae, green weeds.

O green algae absorb the light  
    Replete with chlorophylls a and b,  
And green algae are my delight—  
    My ladye, Chlorophyceae.

    Green weeds are my passion now;  
        With green weeds my heart's afire.  
    Green weeds are my all, I trow—  
        My lovely algae, green weeds.



### *A Mournful Roundelay*

E'er the sunrise, come with me  
Where the waves are foaming free.

Leave your warm and cozy bed  
E'er the fogs of night have fled;  
Seek we algae, brown and red—  
Seek we algae by the sea.

At the breaking of the day,  
Yonder lies our misty way.  
What though morning mists prevail—  
Biting wind, or howling gale—  
Stride we forth, with clanking pail,  
Seeking algae in the spray.

At the dawn we haste away  
Out to point and sandy bay.  
None can know how cold we get;  
None can feel as chill or wet.  
We shall all be colder yet,  
Seeking algae in the spray.

Questing minds must aye explore  
What the oceans hold in store.  
When the stormy tempests blow—  
When the raging tides are low—  
Comfort ye, and let us go  
Seeking algae by the shore.

*Folksong About Moonshine Assimilation,  
Or Something*

O, 'way out on the Bay  
There's some chlorophyll a  
Where the quanta of photons accrue;  
And 'way out in the Sound  
Where the plankton abound  
There are algae that's fixin' CO<sub>2</sub>.

They call it that good ol' CO<sub>2</sub>,  
And them that can fix it is few.  
If you turn on a light  
They can spend all the night  
'Similatin' that good ol' CO<sub>2</sub>.

It was Otto who said,  
With a shake of his head,  
"Let us see what Chlorella can do."  
It can set up a store  
Of three quanta, or four,  
And can use them for fixin' CO<sub>2</sub>.

They call it that good ol' CO<sub>2</sub>,  
(u.s.w.)

And then old Uncle Hans  
Said we hadn't a chance  
To extract an insoluble clue.  
But they proved he was wrong—  
As you'll learn from this song—  
About fixin' that good ol' CO<sub>2</sub>.

They call it that good ol' CO<sub>2</sub>,  
(etc.)

And then old Cousin Kees  
Came and joined in the race  
    With bacteria, red, white, and blue.  
You don't have to be green—  
If you see what I mean—  
    To engage in the fixin' CO<sub>2</sub>.

    They call it that good ol' CO<sub>2</sub>  
    (etc.)

And then poor Cousin Mel  
Had to struggle like hell  
    On the path where the carbon went through;  
But, to no-one's surprise  
He was 'warded a prize  
    For his studies in fixin' CO<sub>2</sub>.

    They call it that good ol' CO<sub>2</sub>  
    (etc.)

And then young Cousin Dan—  
He's the kind of a man  
    Who just wonders what extracts can do—  
Found that chlorophyll juice  
Was enough to reduce  
    Just a smidgen of labelled CO<sub>2</sub>.

    They call it that good ol' CO<sub>2</sub>  
    (etc.)

Now my Cousin André  
Found an easier way—  
    And we'll give the young fella his due.  
He's lost most of his hair  
Catchin' carbon from air  
    In a system for fixin' CO<sub>2</sub>.

They call it that good ol' CO<sub>2</sub>  
(etc.)

Now we've come to the stage  
When such fixin's the rage—  
And it seems not to matter by who.  
If you give us a chance  
We're as good as the plants  
At the fixin' of good ol' CO<sub>2</sub>.

They call it that good ol' CO<sub>2</sub>;  
It's a process that many can do.  
If you'll turn off the light  
We'll respire all the night,  
Generatin' some more CO<sub>2</sub>.

*Lead Kindly, Stromatolite*

When I grow old, let me retire  
Beside a fossil-fuel fire  
To warm my hands, or toast my rear,  
By summer suns of yesteryear;  
To sip the bitter-springs-and-lime  
Of protokaryotic time,  
My dreams of bygone sex confined  
To spores of the subconscious mind.

And, when my final senses fail,  
Then let my mortal clay (or shale)  
For dim posterity be laid  
Beneath a fig-tree's dappled shade  
To hunt the primal cell no more,  
Yet ever seeking, as of yore—  
My rusty gunflint at my hand—  
The bogs of Bungle-Bungle-land.

## *The Amebas*

A myriad of tiny voices were heard outside the biology laboratory one Christmas season, singing the following words to the tune of "O Little Town of Bethlehem." Though it was apparent that, in order to make themselves heard at all, the carollers had to sing at the tops of their vacuoles, the cold weather had so lowered their respiration that many of the words were lost in the wind. The verses have been reconstructed as accurately as possible, however, and are here published for the first time.

O little pulsing bits of me,  
We grieve to see you so,  
While merrily, all wild and free,  
We throng the soil below.

And we, who do not live alone,  
Must sigh for you, above,  
For you are grown in purest clone  
And nothing know of love.

Your world is warm, and all aglow  
With fluorescent light.  
What can you know of soil and snow,  
Of sun, or day and night?

Oblivious of rain, you bask  
Beneath a changeless sky;  
In tube or flask, your single task  
Is but to multiply.

Immured in pyrex walls you grow  
In sugared broths and breis.  
You little know that you must go  
To face a warm demise.

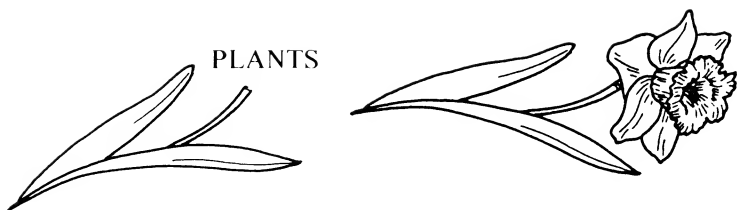
Alas, poor sister protoplast,  
    You little stop to think—  
When all is past, you breathe your last  
    In autoclave and sink.

O sisters, we were torn from you—  
    By fission rent in twain.  
And yet anew we split in two,  
    To ne'er unite again.

We of the earth will not forget  
    You who within abide.  
Your fate is set in drain or Klett—  
    We sigh for you, outside.







### *The Emerald Crystal Ball*

When the tides are warm and low  
Where the tropic sun has shone,  
That is where we look for Pro-  
chloron.

On the shores of Mexico,  
Eniwetok and Ceylon  
Lurk didemnids bearing Pro-  
chloron.

There are things we ought to know—  
Mysteries to think upon—  
Problems that relate to Pro-  
chloron.

How to get the cells to grow:  
Media to grow them on—  
These are what we need for Pro-  
chloron.

Progress has been somewhat slow  
Towards our chosen Rubicon:  
How to tame the tiny Pro-  
chloron.

\* \* \*

Prince, if you desire to know  
Where the last year's snows have gone  
Peer into the heart of Pro-  
chloron.

### *Kastanienbaum*

Beneath the spreading chestnut tree  
we study late and long  
the humble Myxophyceae  
in systems right or wrong.

They thrive in mud or watershed—  
non-saline or marine  
and vary from a purple-red  
to shades of bluish-green.

Their only chlorophyll is *a*.  
They flourish in the light.  
They fix their CO<sub>2</sub> by day  
and nitrogen by night.

Some cells are sheathed or capsulate;  
some lack all forms of dress,  
but, sexless, do not hesitate  
to show their nakedness.

We must attempt to settle now,  
but cannot soon decide  
on what they should be called, and how  
they should be classified.

With varied principles at stake  
we argue endlessly  
around the bench, beside the lake,  
beneath the chestnut tree.

## *Linum and Melampsora*

- Introduction*    The rust is racing with the flax.  
                      The flax, which started first,  
                      Is prone to fungal rust attacks—  
                      Blighted and accurs't.
- Observations*    The flax is sicker than it feels:  
                      In sack-cloth and in dust,  
                      It uses multiple alleles  
                      To save itself from rust.
- The parasite may kill its host,  
                      Or stop it in its tracks.  
                      The last survivor is the most  
                      Impenetrable flax.
- Discussion*      The vital theories of Flor  
                      Invoke a moral trend.  
                      The flax, which got there long before,  
                      May perish in the end;  
                      For every flax that lacks the knacks  
                      Of overcoming rust  
                      Or, in its struggles, stalls or slacks,  
                      Is destined for a bust.
- Summary*        Herein the authors have discussed,  
                      With min., and mean, and max.,  
                      The mathematics of a rust  
                      That decimates the flax.
- Moral*            The race goes rarely to the just—  
                      But, if you can, relax  
                      And contemplate the throes of rust  
                      In overthrowing flax.
- Bibliography*    Rapport, D.J. & C.O. Pearson  
                      1980. Games that genes play.  
                      Evolutionary Theory 4,475.

### *The Grass of No-Man's Land*

Let me lead you where the grass  
Grows a little longer.  
(You may notice, as you pass,  
That its scent is stronger.)

Let me show you where the sod  
Shines, a little damp,  
In a strip where no man trod  
By a roadside lamp.

Let me guide you to a zone—  
Limited, but free—  
That the dogs may call their own,  
Marked by K<sub>9</sub>P.

Waters flush the scents away  
In our human bogs,  
Whereas here the odors stay,  
Fertilized by dogs.

Do you wonder, as you pass,  
Where the scents are stronger?  
Let me show you: where the grass  
Grows a little longer.

\* \* \*

Freely translated from:

Baldur Ragnarsson (Esploroj, 1959): *Nerimarkitaj Herboj*.

Quoted in ELNA NEWSLETTER 15(3)5, May-June, 1979.

## ***Weeds***

The humble Furbish Lousewort  
Is very rarely seen.  
Its flowers all are very small;  
Its leaves are simply green.  
It tends to grow in little clumps,  
As harmless as a lamb,  
Beside the grass where people pass  
Along the Lincoln Dam.

Along the major highways,  
Untrammelled and unplanned,  
Another weed is setting seed  
And covering the land.  
The sprawling Furnished Housewort,  
From sea to shining sea,  
Is covering America  
With massed humanity.

\* \* \*

## ***The Politics of Conservation***

Alas for conservation! At the turning of the year,  
Financial obligations are particularly clear.  
The good of Mother Nature yields to good old Uncle Sam  
And the lousy little lousewort to the Dickey Lincoln Dam.  
  
The land of Ronny Reagan is the land of all-but-free  
That dooms the little darter to the Little Tennessee.  
Alas for conservation! When the budgeteers begin  
And the natives face the Nation, then the Nation tends to win.

## ***Roses***

Roses are like noses:

They blush when freshly blown;  
They tend to freeze  
In a wintry breeze;  
And it's best to pick one's own.

\* \* \*

## ***The Dendrochronomisogynist***

With bristle cones and Torrey pines  
He did the best he could.  
He studied trees and, in their lines,  
He saw beyond the wood.  
He contemplated Nature's laws  
And thought of higher things:  
He had not time for love, because  
He dated only rings.

## ***Epilogue to The Daffodils by Wordsworth***

In striving to identify  
The spots upon our TLC's  
We contemplate the plan whereby  
The yellow flowers woo the bees,  
And wonder, in bucolic bliss,  
What metabolic spirit fills  
The fatty acid synthesis  
In chromoplasts of daffodils.

\* \* \*

Hans Kleining *et al.*

Institut für Biologie II. Zellbiologie Universität Freiburg, Schlänzlestrasse 1  
D-7800 Freiburg, Germany. Re. article in *Planta* 150, 166 (1980).

### *Steep Daisies*

I saw a couple in a park  
    In velvet robes: one short, one tall.  
They stood, half-lighted, half in darkness  
    By a wooded wall;  
And someone said—I don't know who—  
    "There came steep daisies to these parts".  
A broken or misspoken cue?  
    An interplay of hearts?  
And one of those half-shaded folk  
    Said "Cottering!"—a single word,  
Half-whispered, almost as a joke—  
    But nothing more occurred.  
It was a silly dream, I know,  
    And yet, it bothers me a bit.  
Is "cottering" an act, a show,  
    Or someone doing it?  
The daily daisies that we know  
    Cannot be classed as "steep" at all.  
They bloom where lowly grasses grow,  
    But rarely by a wall.  
The message swirled about my mind:  
    Steep daisies? By a grassy wood?  
Steep daisies, of whatever kind,  
    Are rarely understood.  
And so, a half-remembered phrase  
    Disturbed me, more than half awake,  
For half a week of twilight days  
    Beside a daisied lake.

### *The Flowers*

Violets are frail and good,  
Hiding shyly in the wood;  
Rare to find and hard to get—  
Don't be like a violet . . .  
Don't be like a violet.

Lily blossoms, pure and white,  
Fade and wither in a night;  
Proud in chastity severe—  
Don't be like a lily, dear . . .  
Don't be like a lily, dear.

Rosebuds blush as soon as born;  
Roses tremble on a thorn.  
"Touch us not!" the roses bleat—  
Don't be like a rose, my sweet . . .  
Don't be like a rose, my sweet.

Dandelions gild the dawn  
Lustily upon the lawn;  
Many a merry, golden head  
Comes unbidden to my bed . . .  
Comes unbidden to my bed.

Bold and buxom, gold and gay,  
Turns to down, and blows away.  
That's the bloom for honest men—  
Be my dandelion, then . . .  
Be my dandelion, then.



### *The Cherry Tree*

Before the window of my room,  
Her barren boughs ablaze with white,  
All laced with silver overnight,  
    The cherry tree's in bloom.

No sign of leaf, no splash of green,  
Relieves her black and white austere;  
And 'neath the heavens, steely clear,  
    No hopeful color's seen.

A bitter mockery is this  
Of winter wind and frosty flowers  
That, fruitless, melt in empty hours  
    In sunshine's glancing kiss.

When spring awakes the blossom true,  
    She'll bloom in warmer hue.

*Sakura-no-shi*

Cherry blossom in the spring  
    Makes a merry rime;  
Every tree a pretty thing  
    For a little time.  
When the snowy blooms are dead,  
    Gentle winds that pass  
Strip the shaking boughs, and shed  
    Petals on the grass.

When the robins come to sing  
    From a warmer clime,  
I am stirred to burgeoning  
    Little notes in rhyme.  
But, as soon as summer wakes,  
    Springtime fancies pass.  
Tear my verses into flakes  
    And strew them in the grass.

*The Lily*

*(After the style of Wordsworth)*

One morning in the early spring,  
The grass still dewed with night,  
I found a lily burgeoning,  
Suffused in golden light.

And later, when a sunny day  
Had warmed the verdant scene,  
The lily blossomed, tall and gay,  
Of all the flowers, queen.

When I returned across the lea  
As day was almost done,  
She glowed again in majesty  
Beneath a setting sun.

And when dark night concealed the view  
Behind her sable blind,  
The lily, clad again in dew,  
Unfolded in my mind.

*Jequirity Beans* \*

Voo-deo-doo and Haiti-hi!

Watch out for a grim surprise!

Avoid red beans and jequirity seeds

From the dolls with the beady eyes.

Take sugar of lead for your tea instead,

Or arsenic on your greens,

But don't get sick on a swizzling stick

From a doll with jequirity beans.

Swizzle your gin with heroin

Or venom in other guise,

But don't swap queens with jequirity beans

Or the dolls with the scarlet eyes.

Deadly machines are jequirity beans;

A person who eats them dies.

So avoid all scenes with jequirity beans,

And Haitian dolls in skirts or jeans.

The wink of disaster is what it means

From a doll with jequirity eyes.

\* *Newsweek* (Sept. 1962).

## *The Poison Ivy*

*(A song of Elizabethan New England)*

The woods are fragrant in the spring  
With scent of leaf and blossoming:  
The trees are all with catkins hung,  
And purple orchids bloom among  
The poison ivy.

In summer, when the days are long,  
The woods resound with thrushes' song.  
Sweet honeysuckle from the hedge  
Goes trailing to the river's edge  
With poison ivy.

The grapes are ripened in the fall  
Along the bushes by the wall.  
The maples blush before they shed,  
And all the hills are flaming red  
With poison ivy.

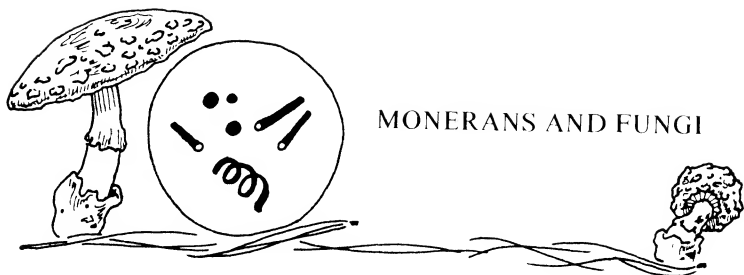
The woods succumb to winter's thrall,  
And snowy blankets cover all.  
We tread secure in heavy boots,  
But 'neath the snow there lurk the roots  
Of poison ivy.

*Blindness in Early Summer Cauliflower\**

The leaves, who whisper songs unsung,  
Do not enjoy a single note  
Of wood-wind in the trees.  
Jack-in-the-pulpit's purple tongue  
Tastes not the nectar in his throat  
That draws the hungry bees.

At morning, when the sunbeams rise,  
The summer cauliflower, blind,  
Can see no gems of dew.  
Without his introspective eyes,  
The convolutions of his mind  
Cannot conceive. Can you?

\* A communication under this title, by Dr. P. J. Salter, National Vegetable Research Station, Wellesbourne, Warwick, was published in *Nature* 180: 1056, 16 November 1957.



*Keep It Clean!*

Don't put germs on the moon, boys—  
Don't go and sully her face.  
There's too many firms  
Of terrestrial germs,  
So let's not contaminate space.  
There's microbes all over the land, boys—  
There's bugs in the oceans as well;  
And if somebody soon  
Goes and mucks up the moon,  
We'll have nowhere that's sterile but Hell.

*You Wait!*

You treat us bugs  
With rays and drugs  
    In quest of morbid sports,  
To grow awhile  
In dungeons vial  
    Or flasks of divers sorts.

You probe with blocks  
In mutant stocks  
    To solve your victual questions;  
Then feed us breis  
To neutralize  
    Our inborn indigestions.

On milk, or meat,  
Or some 'complete,'  
    Our cultures thrive—in vain;  
For o'er the brink  
Of yawning sink  
    You flush us down the drain.

The time, of course,  
Will come, perforce,  
    When *you* will meet *our* terms;  
But until then,  
Goodwill to Men.  
    Sincerely yours,

—*The Germs.*



*The Strain and the Bond*

She was a melancoli clone,  
A prey to moods and shyness,  
Who stayed at home, and grew alone—  
A virtuous f-minus.

She loved another from afar:  
She idolized his gender.  
She little knew of H-fr  
(And less of Waring blender).

Responding to her coliform,  
And tempted by her colihood,  
The H-fr took her by storm  
(As willful f-rs would).

Beguiled by airy persiflage  
(A noxious kind of coltergeist),  
She caught a bout of coliphage;  
Succumbed to it; and lysed.

So, maidens, stay alone—and well—  
Remaining blithe and bonny,  
While other cultures go to Hell  
In coli matrimony.

*La Fermentation* \*

There's yeasts in sausage and yeasts in ham,  
Yeasts in honey and strawberry jam,  
But none of these media can compare  
With the *conséquence de la vie sans air*.

There's yeasts in bottles and yeasts in flasks,  
Yeasts in barrels and yeasts in casks.  
We've beer in plenty and beer to spare  
As a *conséquence de la vie sans air*.

There's yeasts imperfect and yeasts with spores  
(Hats and needles in twos and fours),  
Celibate yeasts, and yeasts that pair  
As a *conséquence de la vie sans air*.

*pp.*

There's shadowy yeasts, both pink and white—  
And I have a yeast that is black as night—  
But color isn't as grave an affair  
As the *conséquence de la vie sans air*.

*adagio*

I think in terms

(when I think at all)

That are saccharomy—

cetological:

But I've reached the stage when I don't much care

As a *conséquence de la vie . . . . .*

*la vie sans air!*

\* R. A. L. 1963. *Chemistry and Industry*, p. 461.

### *The Gay Amanita*

I once had a gay Amanita—  
Exceedingly gay Amanita—  
I found it one day on a fungal foray,  
On a fungal, farungal foray.

I put it in my little basket—  
My gay little, fey little basket—  
It had volva and rings, but who cares for such things  
On a fungal, farungal foray?

I cooked it with salt and with water—  
A soupçon of salt in the water—  
It was scarlet and white, and it tasted all right  
As it came from a fungal foray.

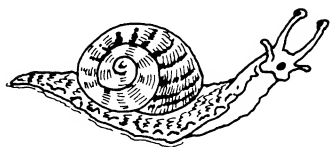
The coroner said, "Misadventure—  
Exceedingly sad misadventure—  
You shouldn't eat food that you find in a wood  
On a fungal, farungal foray.

"Be warned against gay Amanitas—  
Especially gay Amanitas.  
They put up the yields of Elysian fields  
After fungal, farungal forays."





## WORMS, MOLLUSCS, AND CRUSTACEANS



### *Wormsong*

We are the worms, the under-footers,  
Under the hooves of Pan,  
Undermining the greens and putters,  
Grooving the ways of man.

We are the casters, sub-soil pushers—  
Wens on the Irish lawn—  
Beating the birds (the two-in-bushers),  
Ducking the cracks of dawn.

We are the slighted, slithy crawlers,  
Prey to the toads of night;  
'Ware of the fumbling fist-hook maulers,  
Anglers right and might.

Under the hooves of Blitzen burners,  
Under the scorching earth,  
Odds or evens, the warmer turners  
Yearn for the rains of birth.

Down in the fumid, humid humus,  
Under the delve and toil,  
There we await your term and tumus  
Into the seeping soil.

We are the worms, the under-feeted,  
Under the untrod sod;  
Endless tales of the tail repeated,  
Serving the ends of God.

### *Quissett Sands*

Of all the green and pleasant lands,  
There's none to rival Quissett sands.  
Who could in fairness ask for more  
Than such a gently shelving shore?

On rainy afternoons like these,  
Beneath the sand I softly squeeze  
To safe, sublittoral repose,  
Secure from gulls and other foes,  
And there relax, to chew my cud  
Within the all-embracing mud.  
How soft it is! How rich and black!  
I slither up, and burrow back;  
I shrug my mantle, or I squirm  
Beside the slender, naked worm.  
(Poor feeble thing! It must be Hell  
To live without a shielding shell.)

With what exuberance and grace  
Has Providence endowed our race!  
How cunningly devised we are!

I settle, modestly ajar,  
Extend my siphon up, and squirt  
My message from the deepest dirt,  
Condensing my sublime oration  
To one exultant exclamation.

How exquisitely glad I am  
To be a self-effacing clam!

*Limax*

(After Wordsworth)

She dwells among forgotten leaves  
    'mid lost and mossy stones,  
Where, dewy-eyed, the owlet grieves  
    o'er disconnected bones.

Beside the lone, neglected heaps  
    of half-digested grass  
She shelters, where the willow weeps  
    on all that come to pass.

The gentle lettuce seeks to grow  
    to firm maturity,  
But she is at the heart, and, oh,  
    the difference to me!

*Snail* \*

A cottage-loaf, but small and grey—  
A dondulating, drifting barque—  
Goes gravely on its slimy way  
And leaves a glistening mark:

While, periscoping proud and high  
With pin-point pupil, crystal lens,  
On slender waving stem, each eye  
Scans garden hills and glens.

Yet, touching wall or wither'd leaf,  
Within itself the tip retracts. . .  
He slides through life on pure belief,  
Closing his eyes to facts.

\* R. A. L. 1946. *Plan*, *London* 13:2.



*Calvary*

Who has set a humble snail  
    Pronged upon a thorn,  
Helpless as its forces fail,  
    Feeble and forlorn?

When the glistenings of dew  
    Desiccate and fade,  
Pippa passes with her crew  
    Into welcome shade.

While the silly, singing lark  
    Gilds the ebbing dawn,  
Here below, a vital spark  
    Dies upon the thorn.

*Swainsong*

Come live with me, and be my love,  
And so pursue our race  
Towards a world of sober snails  
And modesty of pace.

Beside you, in a flow'ry bed,  
I love to take my ease,  
And, with your foot appressed to mine,  
I thrill in ecstasies.

We have no secrets, you and I:  
We haven't any doors;  
And all you have, I share, my dear,  
And all I have is yours.

We nestle, double helices,  
Each in a fitted house.  
The self-same sentiments inflame  
My ardor and my spouse.

Whate'er I do to you, my dear,  
You do the same to me:  
With Cupid's darts we play our parts  
In matched lubricity.

Come, live with me, and be my love,  
And so pursue our race  
Towards a world of sober snails  
And modesty of pace.

*Relativity: Or Watch Out, You!*

Yesterday I found a snail  
Teetering upon the edge  
Of my garden window-ledge.  
So I took him by the hand  
(Mine—not his) securely, and  
Popped him in the garbage pail.

God, who watches without fail  
Everything we choose to do,  
Doubtless knows a trick or two.  
Finger poised expectantly,  
He may do the same to me  
When *I* venture on a rail.

Out upon a distant limb—  
In some wholly other place  
In the distant realms of space:  
In some stellar atmosphere  
Far beyond the now and here—  
THEY may have it in for Him!

### *Song of the Winkles* \*

I've seen the merry Irish on Saint Patrick's Day parades,  
And throngs of sorry sophomores a-waiting for their grades;  
I've seen a herd of buffalo a-chewing of the cud—  
But I've never seen the wily winkles schooling in the mud. . .

Winkles, winkles, wily winkles, schooling in the mud.

I've seen the fans a-surfing and converging on the gate,  
And gangs of geese a-gathering, preparing to migrate;  
I've seen the Holy Rollers rolling wholly on the floor—  
But I've never seen the winkles in the wrinkles of the shore. . .

Winkles, winkles, wily winkles, schooling on the shore.

I've seen a lot of lemmings milling madly to their graves,  
And porpoises a-spouting on an outing in the waves;  
I've seen a troop of hooligans a-fooling in a band—  
But I've never seen a single wrinkle schooling on the sand. . .

Winkles, winkles, not a wrinkle schooling in the sand.

The ways of little animals are like the ways of men:  
They go off in one direction, then come trooping back again.  
The summer's nearly over, boys, so what're we waiting for?  
Let us join the wily winkles and go schooling on the shore. . .

Winkles, winkles, wily winkles, schooling on the shore.

\* Jenner, C. E. 1956. *Biol. Bull.* 111:291.

### *The Hermit*

'Neath the haunts of cray and cuttle,  
Down between the rocks I scuttle,  
    Deep among the dimming shades  
    Where the rippled sunlight fades.

I am not the one to sidle  
Up the sandy intertidal  
    Into reaches of the net  
    And the fatal vinaigrette.

I am cautious and devout,  
Hardly ever stepping out  
    From my home, where once a snail  
    Used to tuck *his* tender tail.

I prefer to meditate  
In the solitary state,  
    Peering forth, with eyes intent  
    On the murky firmament,

Piously on the alert  
For nutritious scraps of dirt  
    Which I nibble, as I pray  
    For the cuttle and the cray.

*Opabinia* \*

I went to the shore after dinia  
    To run—and to practise a speech—  
And found there a lone Opabinia  
    That had stranded itself on the beach.  
It was like a long sowbug—but thinia—  
    With a kind of a trunk on its head,  
And some children expressed the opinia  
    That it hadn't been very long dead.  
You could see it was just a beginia,  
    Without any idea of the game:  
Its rate of decline had been linia;  
    Its race to oblivion the same.  
  
And so, with a superior grinia,  
    I covered it over with sand,  
And buried the last Opabinia  
    That ever was seen in the land.

\* Whittington, H. B. 1975. *Phil. Trans. R. Soc. Lond. (B)* 271:1-43.

*Sapphirina*

This sapphire, hidden in the head  
Of vitreous planktonic toad  
Is no true jewel but, instead,  
An iridescent copepode.

Beneath her rainbowed carapace  
Concealing mandible and palp,  
She occupies a subtle space  
Within the pharynx of a salp.

She nestles in commensal room,  
Ensconced in an ascidian  
Like unborn Caesar in the womb—  
An opal in a crystal can.

No purpler robe was ever worn  
By toga'd Augustina  
Or any Roman, nobly born,  
Than this of Sapphirina.







## INSECTS AND ARACHNIDS

### *Hanging Gardens*

In Beds. and Salop., Herts. and Hants.,  
Our garden plots abound with ants,  
    Though in the sod where Adam delves  
    They don't make gardens for themselves.

But, on this antithetic topic,  
In humid forests neo-tropic  
    Live other garden-loving ants  
    (Benign insects or miscreants)  
That build, with rooted herb and carton,  
A kind of formic kindergarten  
    Secure from antisocial tykes  
    (Ant-eaters, pangolins, and shrikes)  
And thus exhibit care towards  
Their pupae and their honey-hoards  
    In hanging gardens modeled on  
    The prototypes in Babylon.

\* \* \*

### *Requiescant in Pace*

Beneath the sod repose the bones  
Of insect artist Willy Jones  
    Who painted—e'er his sad demise—  
    A thousand pretty butterflies.  
Their mortal bodies, sad to say,  
Succumbed to mites, and passed away:  
    Only iconotypes remain,  
    Prepared, with artistry and pain  
    (In Chelsea) by that Willy Jones.  
God rest you, Will—and your icones!

*The Locusts and the Ants*

(after La Fontaine)

“You silly ants!” the locusts cried  
And stridulated in their pride.  
“What sterile little lives you lead  
Collecting crumbs and storing seed  
To serve your bloated, fertile queen—  
An animated egg-machine.  
You scutter endlessly around  
The dusty gutters of the ground,  
And fritter little lives away  
In saving for a rainy day,  
While locusts sing, and leap, and fly  
Between the pastures and the sky.”

There came a week of teeming rain  
That inundated wood and plain.  
It sickered through the soggy ground  
And nearly all the ants were drowned,  
While locusts, clinging to the grass,  
Just waited for the clouds to pass.  
And when the sun returned serene,  
And grass grew lush and brighter green  
How merrily the locusts fed,  
And flew, and leaped, and grew, and bred,  
Until their time had come to die  
And leave the pastures for the sky.

*I Am Kind to Animals* \*

A moth,  
White fingers,  
Softly scratching at my window-pane,  
Beating its head  
With muffled, snowball thud  
Again and again on the unseen glass.

Poor thing, I think,  
It will get a headache,  
Or dent the beaten copper of its eyes.

So, laying down my pen,  
I open the window.

In a roaring flutter  
The moth enters,  
And in little loops  
Threshes up the whitened walls,  
Constantly colliding with its shadow  
On the false-sky ceiling.

Now, turning towards the light,  
It slams and slams again into the hot bulb,  
Fluttering down, stalling, with burned antennae,  
Only to rise and stagger madly  
Round the lamp again.

There can be only one end  
To that suicidal career,  
Unless I put a stop to it.

Setting down my pen again,  
I give chase,  
Cupping my hands,  
Like old, two-spoon tea-strainers.

\* R. A. L. 1960. *Atlantic Advocate* (December): 104.

The ink spills on the table  
And the lamp rocks perilously,  
But I have the moth,  
Safe, trembling within my grasp.

Carefully I put it outside  
Upon the windowsill,  
And, quickly, close the window  
On my finger.

And, as I watch,  
The white form,  
Vibrating into grey,  
Takes off from the edge,  
And rises, dwindling,  
Like a solitary snowflake  
Lit in my window-beam,  
Till it disappears,  
Suddenly,  
Into the maw  
Of a silent, swooping, black bat.

I am kind to animals.  
I have done my best,  
And am glad.

That bat must have been  
Hungry.

### ***Butterflies***

Three butterflies flitted across the vale  
And into a field nearby.  
One was a female and one was a male,  
And one was ... a butterfly.  
But whether you wonder what they would do,  
And whether you wonder why,  
Has nothing to do with the likes of you—  
Unless you're a butterfly.

Three long-haired teenagers, filled with joy,  
Were wrestling in the hay:  
One was a girl, and one was a boy,  
And one was ... I couldn't say.  
And maybe you think they played too long,  
Or ought to have played in pairs,  
But whether you think they're right or wrong  
Is of no-one's concern but theirs.

\* \* \*

### ***Femmes Fatales***

Listen, male *Drosophilas*—wee “lovers of the dew”—  
Stay away from female flies: consider what they do.  
Mating with a virgin brings an earlier demise.  
Mating with a lot of them is even worse, for flies.  
If you crave longevity, and yearn for living long,  
Waste no energy in courtship, quarrelling or song.  
Mating isn't good for you, the scientist imputes.  
Stay away from female flies, and stick to simple fruits.

*Elixir of Love and Longevity* \*

Try, Madam, this wonderful jelly,  
Produced by the industrious bee,  
And a beauty serene  
Will embellish your mien  
With a glamour that's wondrous to see.

Test, Lady, this magical lotion,  
Distilled in the gloom of the comb.  
Augment your agility!  
Boost your fertility!  
Keep things a-humming at home!

The use of Royal Jelly cosmetic  
That's cast in tenebrious hive  
Will preserve you, a queen  
Of sustained seventeen,  
And it *may* keep you longer alive.

Your countenance salve with this unction,  
Prepared for the apian throne;  
And long after your spouse  
Has departed your house  
You might still produce offspring, alone.

\* Ad in *The New Yorker*.

*My Heart's in the Highlands*

*(pumping blood for you-know-whom.)*

Along the grooves  
    Where peat is cut;  
In track of hooves  
    And waggon rut;  
Beside the fords,  
    Beneath the bridges  
Hang misty hordes  
    Of merry midges.

By birchwood dank  
    And lochan edge,  
Or boggy bank  
    Of reed and sedge;  
Beside the gate  
    Beyond the mud  
They hang in wait  
    To sip my blood.

*Skater's Waltz* \*

(Dedicated to our best-known oceanic insect.)

Hail the holy *Halobates*!  
How miraculous he skates  
    Over billow, over foam,  
    While other bugs lie snug at home.

He must seek his distant dates  
Where the Date-line undulates  
    Far across the Western seas,  
    North and South at no degrees.

In all kinds of surface states,  
Haply, Mr *Halobates*  
Ultimately copulates  
With his long-sought billow-mates.

Harried Mrs *Halobates*  
Lays her eggs on orange-crates,  
    Flotsam, feathers, bits of boats—  
    Almost anything that floats.

By the oath of Hippocrates—  
Who would be a *Halobates*?

\* Cheng, L. 1972. *Oceans* 5:54-55.



*The Thoughtful Naturalist*

I chanced to see her, sitting there  
    Upon a withered stick,  
Waving her forelegs through the air—  
    A solitary tick.

How was she made aware of me—  
    By warmth, or smell, or sound?  
Was she, perhaps, aroused to see  
    My shadow on the ground?

It must be grim to sit and pray,  
    Hungry, and thin, and dry,  
On vital vigil, day by day,  
    To catch a passer-by.

(I found her later on my knee,  
    Devoutly hanging on.  
I picked her off immediately  
    And flushed her down the john.)

### *Arachne*

The spider left her muddy hole  
Among the forests of the coal  
To suck the prey that crept across  
Her limy lines among the moss.

She spun her webs, concealed from view,  
In shrewd geometries of dew.

A hundred million years went by  
Before the first unwitting fly,  
Unheeding, took the air and met  
Disaster in the subtle net,  
And perished in the lacy maze.

It took you but a hundred days.

### *Group Selection*

The bee that stings a man thereby  
Condemns herself to pine and die.

What benefit can be implied

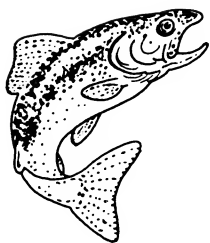
By such an act of apicide?

It helps, in fact, to keep alive

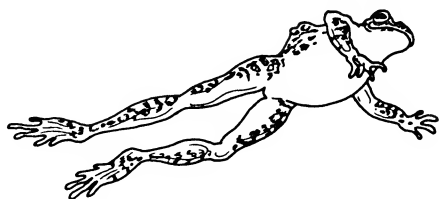
Her little sisters of the hive

Whom we might swat—as is our wont—

But, having learned our lesson, don't.



## COLD BLOODED VERTEBRATES



*Amor vincit omnia.* \*

There once was a toadfish called *Opsanus tau*  
Who lived in a bottle—though goodness knows how.  
He called to each female “O, mate of my soul,  
Come join me and live in this botulous hole.”

The ladies swam up, and they backed off again  
Thinking “Fish will be fishes, and men will be men.  
There’s something suspicious, it’s plain to us now:  
We can’t live together with *Opsanus tau*.”

Though *Opsanus* sang, with a grunt and a groan,  
The ladylike fishes all left him alone.  
He sang like a pig and he looked like a cow,  
So nary a lady loved *Opsanus tau*.

But oceans are vast, and their currents run deep.  
There’s more to a life than just feeding and sleep;  
And now on the bottom, where pressures allow,  
There are oodles and schoodles of *Opsanus tau*.

\* Winn, H. E., and Olla, B. L. 1972. *Behavior in Marine Animals*, pp. 361-385.

### *Fishes' Eyes*

The skate, that seeks food on the bottom,  
Has eyes on the flat of his face.  
The eye on the bottom moves upwards  
In halibut, turbot, and plaice.  
Some fish look in either direction—  
Like mackerel, herring, or cod—  
But blennies look only at gobies,  
And gobies look only to God.

### *Lantern Fish*

I met a little lantern fish—  
Silk-scaled and goggle-eyed—  
And asked him "What is it you seek  
Beneath the ebbing tide?"  
"I'm looking for an honest fish"  
The honest fish replied.

*A Beg for Toads*

See a dried and flattened toad  
Crucified upon the road;  
From the comfort of his pond,  
Sent into the great beyond—  
Pressed into unyielding sod—  
By an omniprescient God.  
Heel or wheel in hurry grim  
Permanently cancelled him  
In a smudge beside the fence  
Of divine expedience.

If another toad emerges  
From his green and pleasant verges,  
Seeing no alternative—  
Let him cross the road, and live!

*Nessie*

Down in the murky depths of Ness  
The Monster and the Monsteress,  
    With half a dozen monsterets  
    (How many, Mrs. M. forgets)  
Eke out their self-effacing lives  
With fourteen cousins and their wives.

Despite their ancient pedigree,  
That growing little family  
    Is generally quite content  
    To pay a minimum of rent  
And live obscurely in the lake  
On anything that they can take  
    (Like dying salmon, upset boats,  
    Odd tourists, and unlucky goats  
That fall from cliff or crag austere  
Into the loch—and disappear.)

The Monsters are a humble lot,  
But they're content with what they've got—  
    Though finally (they say) they plan  
    To migrate back to Pakistan.

### *Saurians*

The alligators of the South  
Have down-turned corners of the mouth,  
    Perhaps because of allegations  
    By rude reptilian relations  
Who cast aspersions on their tails  
And on their subtly sliding scales.

    The common Northern crocodile  
    Is more inclined to wear a smile.  
The tears he sheds so readily  
Are signs of simple joie-de-vie.

    Summer, winter—sooner, later—  
    Warmer, cooler—alligator—  
Eggs in dozens—eggs in piles—  
Male and female—crocodiles.







## BIRDS

### *Bobolinks* \*

Earth has no mysteries like those of birds—  
Distant migrations, and songs without words.  
Why, when the daylight is longer in May,  
Do birds like the bobolinks hasten away?  
What could they want that is better to eat  
Than grains of wild rice and Canadian wheat?  
Given an urge to go, sooner or later,  
Down to the forests beyond the Equator,  
Why don't they stay there, make love, and raise young  
Down in Brazil, in the jungles unsung?

The question is mooted by John and by Will:  
"Why don't the bobolinks breed in Brazil?"  
The bobolinks answer (as we could have guessed):  
"It's too hot and muggy to sit on a nest."

\* Hamner, W. M., and Stocking, J. 1970. *Ecology* 51:743-751.

### *The Birds of Beford Manor*

The peacock and the guinea-hen  
May serve as paradigms for men:  
Each in his manner serves a lord  
In his estate or at his board.

The peacock struts 'mid dappled fawns  
About his lordship's velvet lawns,  
Symbolic of the noble male  
With proudly iridescent tail;  
Whereas the guinea-hen is barred  
And penned beside the kitchen yard.  
A humble, dumpy, sombre sack,  
With simple spots of white on black,  
She wears her feathers like a shawl  
And hardly has a tail at all.

The peacock graces court and stable:  
The guinea-fowl, the dinner table:  
For when, at last, she comes of age,  
The guinea-hen, with rice and sage,  
Is sacrificed without remorse  
To constitute a poultry course.

The peacock, shrilly crying "Pao!"  
Is fond of telling people how  
His kinfolk cunningly contrive  
To stay at large, and stay alive,  
While other birds are slain or shot  
And end up in a cooking pot.

In this, like any other game,  
The principles are much the same:  
If you would thrive while others suffer,  
You have to be a little tougher.

. . .

To serve the lord is not enough:  
You've got to be extremely tough.

*Conversation Under an Oriole's Nest in Vermont*

With all the fresh and pleasant woods  
    To weave his twigged abode,  
He chose to raise his summer broods  
    Above a rustic road.

I asked him why he chanced to build  
    In boughs of dusty green  
That dipped in atmospheres so filled  
    With fumes of gasoline.

He said, "I like domestic trees  
    Beside the traffic's roar.  
They throng with childhood memories  
    Of distant Baltimore."

I thanked him for his view of life;  
    Admired his hanging nest;  
And hurried home to join my wife  
    At Forty-third and West.

*A Lesson in Ornithology*

I thought I heard a nightingale

Creating dulcet melody

In trilling, pentatonic scale

Upon a variable key.

But then, as memories were stirred,

I checked to verify the score—

It is a European bird,

And foreign to this western shore.

Apparently I had been wrong;

It must have been a thrush's song.

I heard at dusk a cuckoo call:

Cuckoo, cuckoo, he seemed to sing,

His tenor, sweetly musical,

Re-echoing, re-echoing.

But have we cuckoos of the kind

That harrow European hearts?

If not, it came into my mind,

We may have local counterparts.

And, on returning home that night,

I learned, alas, that I was right.

*The Ptrials of the Ptarmigan*

In wintertime, the ptarmigan—  
As everybody knows—  
Is blameless as a butterfly  
And whiter than the snows.

He nibbles on the foliage  
Of willow and of rose,  
Assimilating nourishment  
From anything that grows.

But in the silly summertime  
He reels from bar to bar;  
His plumage darkly mottled  
And his soul as black as ptar.

The ptourist is another bird  
Of corresponding feather.  
He flocks in Spring like anything  
And congregates together.

And when the summer time arrives  
He grabs a handy gun  
And goes to kill the ptarmigan  
For supper or for fun.

But ultimately, chilling winds  
Confine him to the house:  
The ptourist in the winter time  
Remains at home to grouse.

And then the subtle ptarmigan,  
At ten degrees below,  
Assumes his pristine charmigan,  
And, safe from mortal harmigan—  
Secure from hunt's alarmigan—  
He flits from farm to farmigan,  
As white as driven snow.

### *The Oiled Swan*

Whereas, for several decades, many thousands of birds yearly have been victims to oil-polluted seawater, the oiled swan is a more recent problem. —*Nature* 180:1453.

Why did he sing, poor bird, poor thing,  
Where the stream ran cold and narrow?  
Maimed to die of a broken wing  
Pierced by a kingsman's arrow.

Fallen as snow, when a cruel bow,  
Bent by a yeoman's hand,  
Sang in the willows and brought him low  
At the whim of a king's command.

Why did he sing, poor soul, poor thing,  
Where the stream ran cold and fast?  
On a silver platter he served his king  
As a course in a royal repast.

\* \* \*

Why does he sing, poor bird, poor thing,  
Where the rainbowed waters roil?  
Doomed to die, he can never fly,  
For his down has been grimed with oil.

Sadly I go to the shades below,  
To the lakes of eternal night.  
There is no pure worth on the streams of earth  
Where a swan is no longer white.

### *Sea-Pie*

O foolish oyster-catcher, why  
Inflict on me your frightful cry?  
You surely cannot think I dote  
On that persistent, piercing note?  
How would you like it, if a pair  
Of us, as would be only fair,  
Should daily follow you around  
With equally depressing sound?

\* \* \*

But we could pipe until we burst;  
We'd certainly get tired first.

### *The Stormy Petrels*

Lone birds, that roam the boundless space  
Upon the open seas  
Have no accustomed resting place  
Among familiar trees.

Each flits and fishes by himself  
Where unseen currents flow  
Beyond the continental shelf  
A thousand feet below.

Their ways converge, and cross, and part  
In paths of no address.  
None but the pining human heart  
Can know such loneliness.

### *The Tern*

The Common Tern's a common bird  
In every meaning of the word.

Though other fowls have deemed it best  
To raise their young within a nest,  
The terns all scorn this system sound  
And lay their eggs upon the ground;  
Then get upset when we approach,  
Intent (the terns suppose) to poach  
On their domestic patch of stones,  
And voice, in no uncertain tones,  
Their angry protest to the skies  
With raucous and discordant cries.

In this indignant frame of mind  
They swoop upon us from behind,  
And manifest parental care  
By snatching beakfuls of our hair.

Now, though we surely wouldn't grudge  
A tuft or two, to save the drudge  
Of seeking nesting-stuffs around  
The shores, where little's to be found,  
It would be quite (to say the least)  
Against the nature of the beast  
To build a nest of any kind.  
They shouldn't put what hair they find  
Upon our heads to utter waste—  
It shows a wanton lack of taste.



In twos and threes they swoop and dive,  
While we, in terror grim, contrive  
To ward them off, with curse and shout,  
By waving maps and things about.

The terns, from scalp-despoiling barred,  
Now quickly play their second card,  
And, from no great a height, resort  
To actions of another sort  
(Which, decently, I shall not name),  
Exhibiting unerring aim.

And, as we, fleeing, stumble o'er  
The weeds and boulders of the shore,  
We hear their hoarse, triumphant cries  
As, distantly, the shouting dies.

\* \* \*

The tern may seem a handsome bird;  
But we have solemnly averred  
That, till these acts have been atoned,  
We'll leave no wretched tern unstoned.

*Lament for a Dead Sea-Bird* \*

I grieve for grebes that wash ashore  
To tread the dappled waves no more.

. . .

This little bird, that lately died,  
Was wont to pedal through the tide,  
    His dumpy body, trim and pert,  
    To overbearing surf alert,  
That braved, with no apparent care,  
All onslaughts of both sea and air  
    When foam would fly and billows boil,  
    Succumbed to feather-clogging oil.  
Each petal-fingered, leather hand  
Is folded by a last command.  
    His life's account is settled now.  
    His elfin bill and shallow brow  
In dead disorder double back  
On soggy plumes of grey and black.  
    He treads the dappled waves no more.

. . .

I grieve for grebes that wash ashore.

\* R. A. L. 1963. *Amer. Scientist* 51:262a.

### *Love*

I take my hat off to the doves,  
Who share my natural desires,  
But somehow manage to make love  
While balanced on electric wires.

The fields of Venus may be tough  
And just as hard as fields of Mars.  
Some people find it hard enough  
To do it in the backs of cars.

\* \* \*

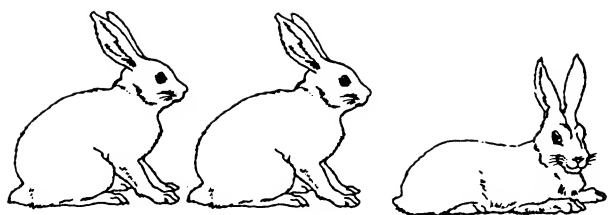
### *The Honey-eater*

The Lewin honey-eater  
(eponymous with me)  
Is infinitely neater  
When sitting down to tea.

His yellow-breasted sibling  
(as common names attest)  
Is more inclined to dribbling  
the honey down his chest  
and fails to screw the cover  
securely on the jar.

The Lewin, you'll discover  
Is tidier by far.





## MAMMALS

### *Lesser Breeds? \**

The Chinese hamster copulates  
At fifty times our human rates.

    This is, to him, a source of pride;  
    It keeps his hamstress satisfied;  
And soon (if books can be believed)  
Ten little hamlets are conceived.

    (I doubt if rates approaching these  
    Are equalled by the Red Chinese.)

But ten new babies in a house  
Are overmuch for man or mouse.

    Compared with him, I'd be content—  
    In both respects—with 10%.

\* *Mensa Bull.* 111:608.

### *The Coolidge Effect\**

You — be you macho man or mouse—  
Should covet not your neighbor's house  
Nor yet his yacht, nor yet his store,  
Nor yet the lady (mouse)(next door).  
The whitest house (or mouse) is not  
For any Jack who wants the lot.  
You should endeavor to resist  
Temptations like a Calvinist.

\* See: Dewsbury, D.A. *Psychology Bul.* **89**, 464 (1981); Hayashi, S. and Kimura, T. *Animal Behaviour* **31**, 81 (1983). Cited in *Nature* **304**, 484 (1983).

## *The Rat Race*

More than ten years ago, discussing the possibility that mankind might become extinct, Professor Haldane said: "If this happens, I venture to hope that we shall not have destroyed the rat, an animal of considerable enterprise which stands as good a chance as any other of evolving toward intelligence." —*New York Times*, 25 July 1957.

If Man should perish from the Earth,  
His heritage perhaps may pass  
To creatures of a lesser worth,  
The enterprising rodent class.

Out from the rubble, dust, and flies,  
Out from the cellars and the holes,  
They will emerge, to blink their eyes,  
And gender intellects and souls,

The steady skill of paws and tools,  
The will to wish, the love to learn,  
With martyrs, kings, and other fools  
To split the atom in their turn;

Till, wracked in fear, in pride unbowed,  
With cankered bones and mutant genes,  
Seared in a spawning mushroom cloud  
*They blow themselves to smithereens.*

Then, from the deeper, darker clay,  
The silly worms shall turn and thrive,  
Their heads no more than tails, for they  
Have but the senses to survive.

*Gracia primae vesperi Februariæ*

(—*Grace for the night of February 1st*)

Awake! The night is young; the moon is full.

The hunting goddess hastens to the chase,  
While, in the fields, the Marathonian bull

Dreams of his deeds to propagate his race,  
His heavy breathing descant to the breeze—

The gentle wind that in the pasture sighs—  
And, like the cowherd, drowsing 'neath the trees,  
He dreams, perchance, of more and better cows.

Awake! And in our midnight revels join

To pass the night and speed the dawn along  
With flowing mead and grilling tenderloin,

With melody and wild, bucolic song.  
I drink to thee, fair goddess of the moon,  
For that my cup of happiness is full;  
To Fate, that brings satiety so soon,  
And Taurus—noble, Zodiacal bull.

*How!*

or

*America the Problematical*

When hungry Indians chose to dine,  
Before the White Men came,  
They caught and ate the porcupine  
(Though by another name.)

But while they smoke the Pipes of Peace  
In dwindled numbers now,  
Prolific porcupines increase—  
(I sometimes wonder, "How?")

### *Kine*

The cow that trudges through the mud  
Or sits around and chews the cud  
    Has horns and ears, and seven stomachs,  
    But otherwise is quite a lummoX.  
She gives us milk—I'm not sure how.  
(That's all I know about a cow.)

I know two things about a horse,  
And one of them is rather coarse.\*

I know three things about a nurse,  
And two of them are even worse.

\* This couplet is by Ogden Nash.  
I thought I'd also have a bash.  
The rest of this low elegy  
Was written by yours truly—me.)

### *The Fossil Pigs of Florisbad* \*

The fossil pigs of Florisbad  
    Were obdurate and mean;  
They foraged through the forests  
    Of the Upper Pleistocene.  
But when I contemplate the world,  
    It makes me rather sad  
To think about those simple swine  
    In far-off Florisbad.

\* Paragraph heading in *Nature* 180:1393.



### *Expression*

The little calf  
Can never laugh,  
Or look perplexed  
Or frown.

To show surprise  
He blinks his eyes  
And gambols up  
And down.

At Nature's need  
He seeks his feed  
Direct from mother's  
Udder;

And then reveals  
The joy he feels  
With oscillating  
Rudder.

### *The Stag at Bay*

Scotland, with her scenic charms,  
Dominates the "Argyll Arms";  
    Paintings crowd the humid halls  
    With a thousand waterfalls,  
Where the herds of deer or cows  
Sniff the breeze, or stand and browse,  
And, in mist and murky weather,  
Crossing streams or trampling heather,  
"Monarchs of the Glen" abound—  
Cervine splendor all around.  
"Noble stags engaged in battle,"  
"Dogs, and deer," and "Highland cattle";  
"Lowing herds at fall of night";  
"Stag and hounds," and "Deer in flight"  
Leaping free from crag to crag;  
Yet another "Dying Stag."  
"Cattle by the river brink"  
Watch me from above the sink.  
On the mantel by the fire,  
"Soft-eyed doe and stately sire."  
Countless scenes of deer and fawns;  
Trunkless heads, and headless horns.  
  
Painted, glassy bovine glares  
Greet me as I mount the stairs.  
"Cattle by the river brink"  
Watch me from above the sink.  
Wounded, dying deer, and dead,  
Throng the walls above my head.

Ruminants oppress my sleep,  
Till, distractedly, I creep  
Out towards some corner that'll  
*Not* be full of Highland cattle.

\* \* \*

Balefully, the "Stag at Bay"  
Stares at me, *au cabinet*.

### ***Elks, Whelks, and Their ilk***

The monarchs of the Irish bogs  
Succumbed to neither men nor dogs  
But (most ecologists agree)  
To calcium deficiency.

They scoured the base-deficient peat  
For antlers and old shells to eat  
Around the Celtic countryside  
And, finding all too few, they died.

Then mourn the passing of the elks  
But note the wisdom of the whelks  
That roam the shore—their native heath—  
With silver-indurated teeth,

And bore to death their mollusc friends,  
Who come to sad, unsuccored ends.  
Without the need for extra lime,  
The whelks survive to modern time.

Thus ungulate and gastropod,  
And all that live by sea or sod,  
Are doomed to be, or not to be,  
By biogeochemistry.

### *The Decline of the Unicorn*

Behold the haughty unicorn,  
His snowy eyebrows raised in scorn.  
The single horn upon his brow  
Distinguishes him from a cow.  
His coat is white, his mane is long,  
His scent is unicornly strong—  
So strong, in fact, that one can tell  
A unicorn by just the smell.

Why is it, do you think, that no-  
One mentioned this when, long ago,  
The unicorns, so bold and grand,  
Abounded all across the land?  
Perhaps it is because, like men,  
They grew tendentious now and then,  
Inclined, when friends could not agree,  
To flaunt their unicornity  
And, as a consequence, were not  
Among the pets that people got  
As birthday presents, or for fun;  
While every lord possessing one  
Was glad to leave it, safe from harm,  
In some far corner of his farm.

But if a virgin chanced to get  
A unicornling as a pet—  
(She didn't mind the smell, for she  
Was girt with pure virginity)—  
She generally chose to lead  
It out to pasture in a mead,  
With halter of a golden tress  
To keep it docile (more or less)—  
The normal method to adorn  
And lead around a unicorn.

The male, though noble in his way,  
Consumes a lot of oats and hay,  
Or seeks the greenest swards of grass  
And browses like a common ass;  
But though an idol of the arts,  
He's little good at drawing carts.  
The female, which is not as tall,  
Gives hardly any milk at all.

The unicorn is dying out:  
There now are very few about:  
Survivors of a noble race,  
Across the land, their price of place  
Is taken by the common cow.

\* \* \*

And virgins, too, are rarer now.

### *Ode to a Doe*

With eye of sloe, the dappled fawn  
Grows up in grace to face the dawn—  
    To greet the sun's refulgent ray  
    In bracken at the breaking day.  
O'er moor and mountain, beck and dell,  
By lochan edge and littered fell,  
    With little fear of fire or foe,  
    The fawn becomes a fallow doe.

And now, beside dark-watered meres,  
Alone, alert, with twitching ears,  
    She hurries by the hills so fast  
    To seek the scents of mornings past.  
From rosy dawn to dappled dusk,  
She tracks the subtle smell of musk  
    That marks a rutting stag. Now see  
    How circumspectly she and he  
Obey Dame Nature's high decree  
To generate posterity—  
    To make another dappled fawn,  
    Another year, another dawn ...

*Sonnet—on the Greening of the Bears*

No other zoo can boast so odd a scene.

Our visitors take second looks, and stare.

They may have seen, perhaps, a bigger bear,  
But never bears so evidently green.

(Of late, our polar bears are going green!)

No longer hungry, shaggy, lean and mean:

Curated now with tender, loving care

In sunny pool beside their concrete lair,  
They seem well fed, contented, sleek and clean.  
(And yet, our polar bears are going green!)

The snows of yester-year, that might have been

A source of algae in their hollow hair,

Have melted long ago, though leaving there  
The causes of this viridescent sheen  
(Their hearts are polar, though their coats be green.)

*Envoi*

Our guardian angels seem to have a flair

For photogenics, or the tiny screen.

Our public image burgeons everywhere

Because our polar bears are going green.

### *Ottery*

A fitter fits;  
A cutter cuts;  
And an aircraft spotter spots;  
A baby-sitter  
Baby-sits—  
But an otter never ots.

Though sinners sin  
And thinners thin  
And paper-blotters blot;  
I've never yet  
Had letters let  
Or seen an otter ot.

A batter bats  
(Or scatters scats);  
A potting shed's for potting:  
But no one's found  
A bounder bound  
Or caught an otter otting.



### *The Golf Lynx*

The golf lynx is a savage cat  
That putters tend to tremble at.  
The ears are tufted in the male,  
Who sports a terminable tail.  
The female is reserved and shier,  
And stays at home beside the fire,  
For she is neither lithe nor keen  
At catching caddies on the green.  
She much prefers to sit and wait  
While her insatiable mate  
Goes stalking grimly to and fro  
To catch an unsuspecting pro  
(Especially the surly kind)  
On whom he pounces from behind;  
Then, with a rarefying roar,  
He drags the fellow to the fore,  
And lugs him to his lynxic lair  
(A handy sandy bunker) where  
He rapidly dismembers him  
By rending limb from knickered limb.  
Then, when he's nibbled off enough,  
He drags the roughage through the rough  
And, after dark, he slyly slinks  
To join his loving lady lynx  
To share his tasty bits of pros  
In calm, collynxial repose.

\* \* \*

To lynxes, players serve as staples.  
The Sport of Kings? The Golf of Naples!

### *The Purple Poodle*

A woman, somewhat past her prime,  
Who walks around these parts,  
Conceals the ravages of time  
By science and the arts.

A snowy poodle takes her out  
For exercise and air.  
The dog is slim; his owner, stout,  
With purple-tinted hair.

One day I plan to summon up  
The nerve to ask her why  
She does not tint her poodle pup  
With matching purple dye.

But she will answer, I suppose;  
“Why, sir, that would look odd.  
A purple poodle would oppose  
Good taste in man and God.”

### *The Old Dog*

Pity the aging coach-hound, who derives  
From far Dalmatia and from sporting lives.  
Distraught with mange, and crippled with the gout;  
Too old to hunt, or even venture out  
To course the coach; too old to change his spots,  
He lies, afflicted by those canine rots  
That strike senility in wolf and fox,  
The victim of some penetrating pox—  
A foul infirmity—that ends his days.  
(He caught it off a hydrant—so he says!)

*Dolphins and Borborygms* \*

What are they saying to one another,  
    'Way down there in the sea?  
Down where the likes of us would smother,  
What are they saying to one another  
    Deep in obscurity?  
Up at the level of ships and billows,  
    All that we hear is the sad intoning  
    Sounds of the dolphins telephoning,  
Talking to one another.

What are we saying to one another  
    Under the sheltering sheet?  
Down where the breaths of life would smother,  
What are we saying to one another  
    Halfway towards our feet?  
Up at the level of lips and pillows,  
    All that we hear is the burping, beeping  
    Sounds of intestinals unsleeping,  
Talking to one another.

Cradle my head by your equator  
    Close to your navel parallel.  
Darker and warmer, sooner, later,  
Cradle my head by your equator  
    Where I can listen well,  
Tuned to abdominal tones the clearest.  
What has your tummy to tell me, dearest,  
    That even your heart can't tell?

\* Kellogg, W. N. 1962. *Natural History* 71(2):30-39.

## *Shanty*

On Greenland's Shores

The captain leads a decent life—

    An honest man is he.

He leaves his children and wife

    In Bedford-by-the-Lea,

And goes with forty sealmen a-sailing off to sea.

    So swing your pretty paddles, boys,

    From little seal to seal.

    The mothers never notice, boys;

    The babies never feel—

And we'll all be gone from Greenland in the morning.

And all the jolly sealmen

    Who make his merry crew

Are honorable citizens,

    And decent fellows, too.

Those forty honest Cornishmen are good as me or you.

    And what's a little blood, me boys?

    So what's a battered brain?

    It's o'er the ocean flood, me boys:

    We'll nay be back again

When we've left all-bloody Greenland in the morning

They batter out the babies' brains

    With lethal hammer blows.

They leave whatever else remains

    To stain the bloody snows

And eighty thousand carcasses are left to feed the crows.

There's bags of pretty fur, me boys:  
There's yards of furry trim:  
There's sealy coats for her, me boys,  
And sealy hats for him  
When we flog the fleece of Greenland in the morning.

They make a living from the seal  
Of Greenland's chilly floes.  
The blizzards and the nights conceal—  
The bodies decompose—  
Till eighty thousand skeletons lie frozen in the snows.

So pack your pretty paddles, boys,  
And pack your stinking sacks.  
There's dollars from the dead, me boys  
(The Devil take the tax!)  
We'll be back on Greenland's shores another morning.

### *Chez nous*

Back in the days of shortages of flats  
    We took an attic, for a modest fee,  
In company with six or seven bats  
    Who'd got there first. We lived *chez chauve-souris*.

Then came the mice, and peace of mind was gone,  
    With squeals of fear, and squeaks and flying fur.  
My wife fled hither, and the mice fled yon,  
    Distraught with terror and with *sauve qui peut*.

Our present home is new. It serves to house  
    (Apart from spiders) just my wife and me;  
And so, as long as circumstance allows,  
    We choose to call it simply "*Sans Souris*."

### *Bats-eye View*

I can hear the narrow echoes  
    From the wires along the street.  
I can hear the brittle beetle  
    And the muffled moth-wings beat.  
I have but to click and listen  
    To the echoes that I make  
And I hear the waters glisten  
    On the surface of the lake.  
From the branches and the belfry  
    To the solid earth below,  
These are objects without question;  
    They are things of which we know.  
Though you talk of clouds and moonshine  
    And of subtle starry beams,  
There is only light and darkness;  
    All the rest is human dreams.

*A Whale\**

Could someone catch a whale, do you suppose,  
With just a rod and line; and would you wish  
To hook him through the tongue, or through the nose,  
Or through the jaw, as if he were a fish?

Would he implore you, then, to let him go,  
And bargain, with ingratiating tone,  
With promises to be your slave, to show  
Eternal deference to you alone?

And could you ever tame him, like a bird,  
To be a pet for children in the street?  
(The whole idea is utterly absurd—  
Just think of all the shrimps he'd need to eat!)

\* Job 41.

### *The Watchers*

Here are the grey whale watchers,  
    Watching for breach and spout;  
Where the waves are low and the winds are slack,  
Catching a glimpse of a shining back  
    Or a tail fluke flashing out.

There are the gulls that, daily, keep  
    Watch on the wind-swept beach:  
Wards of the wave-lands, green and white,  
Scanning the surf from dawn till night—  
    Watching the grey whales breach.

Here are the souls of sailors,  
    Watching the gulls alight;  
Watching the birds that watch the whales  
That rise to the surface with ships and sails  
    And dive to the depths of night.

There are the gods of oceans,  
    Watching the souls of men  
That soar like gulls on the wine-dark sea  
Or dive to the depths of obscurity.  
    Only to rise again.



*Loris and Young*

Deep in the jungle gloom, unsung,  
Upon a bough divided,  
There sits a loris with her young  
And ponders, undecided;  
For, having given recent birth  
To yet another primate,  
Should she now clamber down to earth  
To face a foreign climate  
And set her furry little child  
Upon a path of glory,  
Or keep him in the jungles wild,  
Safe in the upper storey?

She contemplates the ground below  
And seeks a wise solution  
Between a cozy status quo  
And further evolution.  
She cannot see what lies ahead  
Or where her race is going:  
She sits and contemplates instead—  
Uncertain and unknowing.

Her eyes are brown, her view is wide—  
Though lacking second vision;  
But worries trouble her inside  
With doubt and indecision.  
She lacks a tail, that elf forlorn—  
She manages without it.

\* \* \*

She says the child is virgin-born—  
And who are we to doubt it?





## SOMEWHAT SCIENTIFIC SUBJECTS

### *Dross*

“Foreign bodies, other matter,  
Aliens of many sorts,  
Clutter pristine scenes, and scatter  
Rubble over golden quartz.  
Junk piles up in mountain ridges”  
(Grumbled Granite to Basalt)  
“But, however Nature changes,  
It is surely not my fault.”

## *Dust*

Before the hills, before the vales—  
Before the Earth had solid crust—  
There shone, as in the comets' tails,  
A glow of interstellar dust.

A later handful of that earth  
Was moulded to a human shape,  
Engendering, without true birth,  
A walking, talking, human ape.

In Egypt, as in Araby,  
Where desert wind stirs desert sand,  
A cloud, born in the Sphinx's lee—  
Dust-devil—blows across the land

And housewives—may their tribe increase!  
The feather-dustered ecocrats,  
Chase from our mortal mantelpiece  
Grey dust, to underneath the mats

While, in another desert land  
Where mourns the witless whippoorwill,  
The earth is drilled, the rivers panned,  
And gold-dust fills the eagle's quill.

Of late, a grim Chernobyl dust,  
Corrosive as a lethal ray,  
Falls over all the World's good crust—  
And careless Man returns to clay.

("Dust" was one of the assigned subjects for the poetry contest in the 1986 *Eisteddfod*. This poem, being in English, would not have been eligible for consideration.)

### ***Instant McBroth***

(From small print on the package.)

Double packet saving trouble;  
Double saucepan at the double;  
Round about the cauldron go;  
In the bubbling waters throw:—

Toad and vegetable fat;  
Linseed oil for cricket bat;  
Leg of frog and eye of ant;  
Sugar, anti-oxidant;  
Fillet of a skinny skate;  
Monosodium benzoate;  
Simple sauce of soya bean;  
Carraway and carragheen;  
Tail of newt and cone of larch;  
Shallot, salt, potato starch;  
Tangles gathered by the tide;  
Added color certified;  
Owlet's wing and skimmèd milk;  
Powdered artificial silk;  
Nose of Turkish belly-dancer;  
Desiccated taste-enhancer;  
Dextrose and emulsifier ...  
Simmer slowly on the fire.

Double-bended, sway and stoop  
Till the charm is instant soup:  
Toil and trouble obviated  
By the packet rehydrated.

### ***Us, the People***

The DNA of plasmids can be spread upon a grid  
Like trails of littered highways that scored about the countryside.  
The intellect of Man confronts his ego with his id—  
The genius of Jekyll vies with villainies of Hyde.  
Our desperate propensities extend on either hand.  
We seek genetic remedies for curing human ills,  
Yet manifest a talent for destruction of the land.  
Conflicting over matters between good and evil wills,  
We seek a better world, from which we struggle to escape.  
We engineer the naked gene, yet laud the selfish ape.

\* \* \*

### ***Bushes and Ladders***

We are but hollow, broken reeds  
In Evolution's bushes.  
We do not seek where Virtue leads:  
We yield where Nature pushes.  
Instead of mounting higher and higher,  
Ascending from old apes,  
We flee from bold Prometheus' fire  
Down Nature's fire-escapes.  
We are not heroes that, unsung,  
Ascend Dame Nature's ladder  
But, climbing downwards, rung by rung,  
We go from bad to badder.  
And yet, unfazed by metal bars  
And theories cladistic,  
We seek salvation in the stars,  
(*Homo peroptimistic!*)

## *The Gels*

See the pretty, patterned gels—banded gels:

What a subtle sequencing their separation tells!

(Touching terminal solutions may entail electrocutions.)

Poly-n-acrylamide agitates on every side.

Hocus-pocus focussing can justify a gel.

(Agarose by any other name would serve as well.)

Shades of true Coomassie bluing decorate the bio-lab.

See the fractions all accruing—neat analyses ensuing—

On the palpitating slab.

Spots, in parallels and arches, maculate the plated starches.

See the mass of information on the rites of separation

As the correspondence swells

In Dame *Nature's* Book of Kells

Like the boundless desert sands;

Like the Holy German bands;

Like a sacred mass and solemn on a fifth, or seventh, column.

Good St. Arne, final-zonal,

Bless our antibodies clonal

In the differential gradients

With thy scintillating radiants

In the jillions of gels—

In the gels, gels, gels, gels

Gels, gels, gels—

In our plethora of separation gels.

\* \* \*

*Anoa*

*(Why on earth? —or Zoogeography for the Undispersed)*

The buccaneer Balboa,  
    Who scourged the seven seas,  
Discovered the anoa  
    Upon the Celebes.  
Extending north to Goa  
    By several degrees  
To east of West Samoa  
    Beyond the Hebrides.  
It's stouter than the boa,  
    More venomous than bees,  
And carries loa-loa  
    (A horrible disease).  
The kiwi and the moa  
    That lived among the Keys  
Infested Krakatoa  
    With phalaropes and fleas.

\* \* \*

Among the Metazoa  
    That thrive on chalk or cheese,  
It's somewhat strange that Noah  
    Should rescue things like these.



## *The Plumed Serpent*

*(A lay of Leda and Laocoon)*

A snake and a dove are alike, my love  
    (As I often assure the missus),  
Though it may be true that a dove goes "coo"  
    While a serpent only hisses.

A snake and a dove are alike, my love;  
    They avoid both cats and cattle.  
They have three main parts to their inmost hearts  
    And they worship Quetzalcoátl.

A snake and a dove are alike, my love;  
    Though a dove is but rarely found  
With the kind of nest that a snake likes best  
    In a hole in the leafy ground.

A snake and a dove are alike, my love:  
    They belong to the self-same firm.  
They have beady eyes; lay eggs; eat flies;  
    And have almost the same-shaped sperm.

## *Whose Necks?*

(" . . . Our Jurassic egg is pretty certainly from a sauropod dinosaur that . . . looked like a tadpole evenly mounted on four lumpy legs. . . ."  
—*New Yorker*, April 19, 1959, p. 31.)

Buried in Jurassic cores  
Lie the lanky dinosaurs.  
    (Dinosaurs of either sex  
    Had the most majestic necks.)

Dusty, too, the warty toads  
Flattened on our Recent roads.  
    (Toads are tadpoles when they're small,  
    With no sign of neck at all.)

Ostriches have necks and legs  
When they hatch from mother's eggs.  
    (Baby frogs, you may recall,  
    Haven't any necks at all.)

Though the squat hyenas laugh  
At the angular giraffe,  
    Stretching makes him slim and tall.  
    (Tadpoles have no necks at all.)

\* \* \*

Write it large across the wall:  
Tadpoles have *no* necks at all.

### *Relative Speeds*

The bee, that zooms from hive to flower  
At seven million lengths per hour  
Can spare no time for mice, that go  
Five hundred thousand lengths or so.

But mice run ten times faster than  
The best laid schemes of modern man:  
Some fifty thousand lengths we get  
In racing car or flying jet.

While Bannister, when sorely pressed,  
Does 15,000 lengths at best.

The tortoise, when he hits the trail,  
May touch a thousand, like the snail;  
But this is lightning—for it means  
Eight times as fast as ocean Queens.

Our Earth, with all its earthly power,  
Goes hurtling through the heavens vast  
At seven lengths within the hour.

(A bee's a million times as fast.)

### *Study Interred*

*(To the tune of "Coming Through the Rye.")*

Cats are nice, and bury theirs.

Rabbits aren't so neat.

Dogs leave various affairs

All along the street.

Snails put little question marks,

Slyly asking why.

Worms are fast at curly cast.

Thank God cows can't fly!

Horses drop their apples, steaming,

Anywhere in town;

Trotting, or just standing, dreaming—

Dogs, at least, sit down.

Seagulls' splashes—chalk and ashes—

Spatter from the sky.

Mice make raisins. Flies blow mirrors.

Thank God cows can't fly!

*I Am a Brother to Dragons, and a Companion to Owls \**

1. "That's all," the barber said, "Who's next?"  
But I was drowsing on the text  
Of some long out-of-date gazette.  
My turn, I reckoned, wasn't yet.
2. I put the question, as before,  
To fellow creatures in the store.
3. I asked the educated owl,  
But he would only sit and scowl.
4. I asked the dragon, as a friend  
Of destinies that shape our end.  
He breathed a little belch of fire,  
And hurried off to Oxfordshire.
5. Leviathan was fast asleep,  
But mumbled something from the deep.
6. At last I got the warning word  
From quite a dull and dowdy bird:  
"You're overwrought" the dodo said,  
"And overarmed, and overbred.  
"Perverse, purblinded and perplexed,  
"Mankind, it seems to me, is next."

\* Job 30:29.

### *The Cleaners*

When lambs abort, and cattle die  
    In drouth or by the pest,  
Their carcasses offend the sky  
    And rot to final rest.  
But life shall come as life must go  
    And seasons turn the scene.  
Thank God for beetle, grub, and crow  
    That pick the cages clean!

\* \* \*

### *The Worried Axolotl*

An old and infirm axolotl  
Enquired of Charles Darwin, "Pray, what'l  
    They do when I die?    Will they soak me in lye,  
Or pickl my bones in a botl?"  
Said Charles, "You may worry a litl  
Concerning your final aquitl,  
    But while you're alive,  
    If you ask, who'll survive,  
I can tell you at once: the most fit'l."

### *Unions Mendelian and Morganatic*

Someone conditioned a salmon sperm  
    To fuse with a hamster cell.  
The cross was a wan, Wagnerian worm  
    With a salmony-hamstrous smell.  
It had neither feather, nor fur nor scale;  
    Nor hoof, nor horn, nor hair,  
But nine double-fibrils propelled its tail  
    With the aid of a central pair.  
It browsed upon copepods, flies, and chow;  
    It chewed neither gum nor cud;  
And it orientated—we don't know how—  
    With the magnetite in its blood.  
It multiplied at the turn of tide  
    And headed upstream for bogs,  
Leaving its offspring there to abide  
    Like lemmings or prairie dogs.  
But they had to go down to the seas again—  
    To the lonely sea and the sky—  
With a yen, they say, for some B.S.A.  
    From the hand of a P.S.I.  
So some spring night, when the moon shone bright—  
    Or perhaps in the early fall—  
They spawned and mated, and aggregated,  
    In answer to Nature's call,  
And headed out to the open sea,  
    To the realm of the wild sardine  
(With a minimal store of A.T.P.)  
    At the call of a selfish gene.  
They swam offshore with an inborn urge,  
    Oblivious of the cost,  
And virtually none could survive the surge,  
    And practically all were lost.

So nobody now is left to tell  
The tale of the hybrid worm  
That grew when they melded a hamster cell  
With the germ of a salmon sperm.

\* \* \*

### *The Ultimate End of the Grollux*

I'll tell you about the remarkable grollux.  
It sometimes cavorts, and it frequently rollux.  
It lives among padlox and fetlox and mattox  
And sleeps upon rags and dishevelling tattox  
(Preferring pure wool to your satins and sillox).  
It ambles on planes and gambols on hillox.  
It's subject to chills, but it conquers the collux  
With decimal doses of castor and pollux.

The male, with a flexible, helical phallux,  
Is even more poplar at parties than salix,  
But though he exults in bucolical frolix,  
The grollux is hardly appreciably prolix  
For, though they have paws with opposable pollux,  
The copulous grolluxes haven't got bollux.

When grolluxes strive for uxorial junction  
They're prone to cohabit with little conspunction,  
And so I conclude that, in spite of their unction,  
The race of the grollux is doomed to extunction.



*The Abominable Snowman*

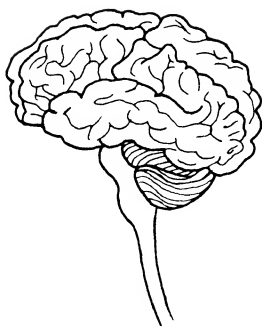
I met him plodding through the snows,  
A venerable yeti;  
The hair hung shaggy from his nose  
Like honey-stained spaghetti.

(A yeti's hard to find, they say,  
And harder still to hunt.  
His footprints point the other way;  
His feet are back-to-front.)

And was he out of Elveshjem,  
Or making for Tashkent?  
I knew not whitherto he came,  
Or whence he may have went.



## MEDICAL



### *My Nervous System*

My nervous system gnaws its nails:  
It's worried, tense and shy,  
Its confidence or courage fails  
When people catch its eye.

My sympathetic system tries  
To calm its mate, and me,  
And does its best to tranquillize  
By kindly sympathy.

This helps a bit, perhaps—and yet,  
Whatever people say,  
My nervous system seems to get  
More nervous every day.

\* \* \*

### *Neuroses*

By any other name  
Would smell as sweet new roses—  
All redolent the same,  
As Nature predisposes.  
But then this problem poses  
To worry and distress us:  
Who wants to breed new roses  
While still the old oppress us?

### *The Middle Way*

Until the moment of my birth, the middle of my belly  
Was kept supplied with glucoside in Wharton's wondrous jelly.  
My being was umbilicous: my body and my soul  
Were absolutely governed by abdominal control.  
But when, at term, I saw the light, and started respiration,  
They cut off my supply lines in o navel operation,  
And left me but a cicatrice, an isolated wen,  
That never could be dominant or bellicose again.

I breathe the air of freedom now, no longer in its thrall.  
That humble dimple doesn't lead to anything at all.  
Yet when, in introspective mood, I contemplate the spot  
That used to rule my system—though at present it does not—  
I wonder about fetal life, before they set me free,  
And dream awhile in retrospective omphaloscopy.

\* \* \*

### *Chewing Gums*

On peppermints I used to dine,  
And Listerine, and Tums,  
But now my breath blows fresh and fine  
Past neatly sawn-off gums.

Where bits of autolysing meat  
Once lodged between the ridges,  
I now have molars, clean and neat,  
Among my golden bridges.

My lower teeth are shiny white—  
Likewise my gleaming uppers.  
I only wish that, every night,  
I could afford my suppers.

### ***The Inward Eye***

My arms are thin and hairy; my knees are knobbed and scarred.  
I'm muzzled like a monkey and I'm grizzled like a pard.

In physical appearance I've grown uglier and old—  
But the edges of my retinas are wondrous to behold.

I'm facing grim senility; my body's getting frail  
As one by one, my faculty-supporting systems fail.

I can't do push-ups any more, or bend to touch the ground—  
But the vessels of my retinas are absolutely sound.

My hearing's growing weaker; my vision's growing dim.  
My chance of reaching 80 may be relatively slim.

They'll say about my body when they lay it in the ground,  
"His heart and mind were feeble—but his retinas were sound."

\* \* \*

### ***Minnehaha—Passing Water***

Old Columbus had a notion—  
Some would say, a crazy scheme—  
Seeking Indies o'er the ocean,  
Noting seaweeds in mid-stream.

Pioneers, with sound and fury,  
Travelled west with wagon team,  
Fording o'er the wide Missouri,  
Changing horses in mid-stream.

Tell me not in empty numbers  
Life is but an idle dream.  
After meals, or after slumbers,  
Take your samples in midstream.

### *Sweetmeat*

(See Jansen, K., 1980. "Meat of Life" *Science Digest* 78)

Eat the product of your labor:

Chew it raw or try it fried;

Share it with your dearest neighbor—

Let your conscience be your guide.

Try to be environmental—

Never mind the bloody taste!

All that protein placental

Should not be allowed to waste.

Do as other mammals do:

Eating afterbirth is fun.

Chop it: pop it in the stew:

Take it on a toasted bun.

Add a little Wharton's jelly:

Season it with sage and salt.

If it seems a trifle smelly,

Wash it down with hops and malt.

Barring sickness or abortion,

Earthquake, flood, or storm at sea,

Plan to get another portion

At the next delivery.

## *A Spell for Hallow E'en*

(To be incanted softly but clearly over an autoclaved pestle and mortar filled with distilled water, tongue depressors, and tadpoles.)

*Persil* ever washes whiter:

*Rinso* makes a softer sud:

Castles cross and bishops mitre

At the Sign of Occult Blood.

Every seventh son's a lemon:

Every seventh bomb's a dud.

*Angel dust's* a double demon—

Mickle, fickle Occult Blood

Sip the cup when wine flows redder.

Nip the roses in the bud.

Fill the fertilizer-spreader—

Horse-manure and Occult Blood.

Hark the final Herald's Dribble,

Passing water—Noah's Flood.

Adam's seed and Adam's rib'll

Bear a trace of Occult Blood.

Glug!

Glub?

Glug.

### ***The Hunter***

Nanook of the frozen land,  
On a frigid, floating floe  
Cast of old, enamelled snow,  
Kneels, harpoon in either hand,  
Poised to deal a lethal blow  
To a seal that swims below.

So kneel I, as by confessor,  
Where the flushing waters flow,  
With my mighty tongue-depressor  
Poised to deal a lethal blow  
To my prey, that floats below.

By my kayak toilet-bowl,  
Far from seals and Arctic birds,  
I, the master of my soul  
(Hern the Hunter, Nerd of Nerds)  
Stalk the sleek, elusive turds.



*Song of the Med. School Alumnus*

Cogito, et ergo sum  
San Diego med. alum,  
Healing ills that need attention  
In the parts too dark to mention:  
Striving hard to overcome:  
San Diego med. alum.

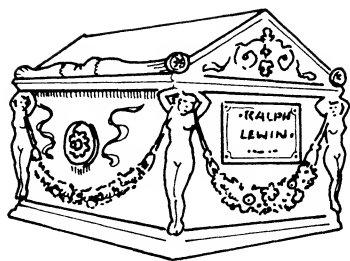
Cogito, et ergo sum  
San Diego med. alum,  
Out to cure the ills of ages,  
Corporal or mental rages,  
And to tend the common scum:  
San Diego med. alum.

Cogito, et ergo sum  
San Diego med. alum,  
Girt to combat all diseases  
With the latest remedieses,  
Stethoscope and speculum:  
San Diego med. alum.

Cogito, et ergo sum  
San Diego med. alum.  
One explores, another teaches  
On the sunny sandy beaches  
(Not so simple, not so dumb:  
San Diego med. alum.)

Cogito, et ergo sum  
San Diego med. alum:  
Intellectus et urbanus  
Noziz elbow fromizanus—  
Officem et clinicum:  
San Diego med. alum.





## RELIGION

### *Good King Wence*

(This is a translation of a carol, recently found among the archives of a Bohemian monastery—the same one from which *Good King Wence's Lass* originated.)

Good King Wence the First\* went out on the Feast of Esther  
For his year-end walkabout with his palace jester.

Lads and lasses on the way made his passage pleasant:  
Gave him frankincense and bay, fatted calf and pheasant.

Later, in the palace halls, freed of fur and feather,  
Meats were cooked with matzoh-balls. Dined they all together.

Then they sang, both rich and poor, virtuous and wicked:  
“Old King Cole” and “Mo aus Zur” as the candles flickered.

Good King Wence’s wife looked out from her bedroom windy:  
“What’s that bawling all about? Why the royal shindy?”

“Bring me wine this noble night: bring me gin and tonic!”  
Poor old Good King Wence got tight, something really chronic.

“Hither, page, and hold my hand. Aches my head appalling.  
I can now but barely stand, and am prone to falling.”

“Look out, Wence!” the jester cried—but, with crash and clatters,  
Poor old Wence collapsed beside all those empty platters.

Good King Wence’s light went out, after all the candles.  
Jesters chuckle still about all those palace scandals.  
Far beyond the forest fence, peasants hale and hearty  
Tell the tale of Good King Wence and his palace party.

\*He was actually First, though he looked Forth.

### *Leda and the Swan*

A god they called Jupiter, Woden, or Thor—  
Or Jove or Jehovah, according to lore—  
Lived up on Olympus (some call it Valhalla)  
With other immortals like Buddha and Allah.  
In fields that were fragrant with thyme and with basil,  
He dwelt in the shade of an ash called Yggdrasil,  
Right up in the hills, by the side of a path,  
In a split-level palace (2 bed and 2 bath)  
With sauna and pool of celestial blue,  
A patio (tiled) and a wonderful view.

He lived with his wife, yclept Frigga or Freda,  
But yearned for the love of a lady called Leda  
Who dwelt in a village, the Back-of-Beyond,  
In a cute little house overlooking a pond.  
This Leda, a lissome and lispng young maid,  
Had lips like ripe cherries and eyes like brown jade.  
Her hair was jet-black, very glossy and fine.  
Her face was a picture; her form was divine.

“She’s very attractive” thought Odin (or Jove).  
“I’ll take me a walk down Elysian Grove.  
I think that it’s time I went hurtling down  
And had me the dame for a night in the town.”

But when he presented himself to the maid,  
She blushed at his ardor, and grew sore afraid.  
“I’ve never made love to immortals before,”  
She said with decision, and bolted the door.

But Thor didn't take to so firm a rebuttal,  
And thought up a scheme that was bold and yet subtle:  
He'd turn himself into a bull, or a shower,  
And, thereby disguised, he'd get into her bower.  
But bulls are quite scary, and showers are wet:  
The lady became even harder to get  
Till the plan that he finally lighted upon  
Was to turn himself into the form of a swan.

He flew down again to the Back-of-Beyond,  
And found his fair Leda asleep by the pond.  
He settled beside her, extended his wings,  
Fluffed up his white feathers and hackles and things,  
Extended his elegant neck on her breast  
And lay down to join in her afternoon rest.

But when it grew dark, he unfolded his plan:  
The swan retransformed to the shape of a man,  
And down in the rushes it soon came to pass  
That he hadn't much trouble seducing the lass.

With Leda's affection and Jupiter's might,  
They went to it hard for the rest of the night.

Next morning, as Eos was tinting the dawn,  
He yawned "Thank you, Leda. Now I must be gone.  
"I'm Thor" he revealed, as he kissed her goodbye.  
"You thaid it" she groaned, "And, my god, tho am I!"  
With that, he departed. He left his fair Leda,  
And went back to Hera (or Frigga or Freda).

No longer a maiden, fair Leda conceived,  
And bore him a baby, 'tis widely believed;  
And if you should ask "Was it god, girl, or boy?"  
The answer, they tell us, was Helen of Troy.  
(This may seem unlikely. It is, I'll allow,  
But it's all I have time to be telling you now.)

### ***Perfect Faith (a Moral Tale)***

A tale of faith, and life and death, is this:

A mountaineer fell down a precipice.

A hundred feet he fell, or maybe two,

Until he tumbled by a bush that grew

From some small crevice on the rocky wall

He clutched a branch, and stayed his headlong fall.

For many minutes there the fellow hung

And, as to that slim bramble-bush he clung,

He saw beneath, a thousand feet or so,

The boulders on the valley far below;

While, far above his solitary ledge,

The sky was dark beyond the cliff's high edge.

His hands grew numb; his arms did sorely ache.

"Help me" the fellow cried "for pity's sake."

His shouting echoed from the mountain-side.

"I cannot hold much longer. Help!" he cried

"Or I shall fall and, fallen, surely die.

Is anyone up there to hear my cry?"

Then came a voice, like thunder from the night:

"I hear you, son, and I shall heed your plight.

If you have total, perfect faith in me,

Then fear not death to any slight degree.

You do have perfect faith, beloved son?"

"Most certainly!" replied the hanging one.

"My faith is absolute, in you alone:

But hurry, please—my strength is all but gone."

"Then listen" said the voice from far above.

"As I have might and omnipotent love,

Be not afraid, my son: be not alarmed.

You shall survive this accident unharmed.

Harken to what I say. When I count three,  
Release your hold, and fall. Through piety,  
On which you set so confident a store,  
A bush upon the distant valley floor  
Shall cushion your descent, and you shall land,  
Unhurt, upon a gentle bed of sand.”  
The fellow heard; yet, looking down once more,  
He saw but boulders on the valley floor  
A half a mile below.

He turned his eyes  
Once more towards the cliff-edge and the skies  
And, with a voice of infinite despair,  
Shouted “Is anybody *else* up there?”

\* \* \*

### ***His Aim***

There lived an old curmudgeon in the house across the  
street—  
As surly an old so-and-so as you could chance to meet—  
And whether it was warm or cool, in weather fair or foul,  
He always could be counted on to greet us with a scowl.  
His wife was very sweet and kind, as patient as you please  
She did the work of two to let her husband live at ease.  
She cared for all the household chores, and gardened on the  
side—  
Until one day, quite suddenly, she had a stroke and died.  
I heard the news from someone I encountered in the park.  
“Such acts of God are sad” she said; “His ways are strange and  
dark.”  
She paused a while, then added “But it sometimes seems to me  
His aim may not be quite as good as once it used to be.”

### *Planning*

A novice in a nunnery, fair Anne,  
Spent Sunday night in bed with a young man.  
Before he left, before the day was light,  
She asked the lad with whom she'd spent the night  
For some small token of their act of bliss:  
An army penknife, preferably Swiss.  
Considering this reasonable need,  
The fellow more than willingly agreed  
And in the Monday market bought a knife  
Combining such necessities of life  
As screwdrivers, large blades with double grooves,  
And a thing for taking stones from horses' hooves.  
That evening, the honest country swain  
Climbed back into the nunnery again  
And gave her such a knife, its cross of white  
A fitting symbol of their Sunday night.  
She thanked him; but, before they bade farewell,  
She took him back into her humble cell  
And showed him that her wooden bedside stand  
Was full of army knives from Switzerland.  
He paused amazed beside her chamber door  
And asked her what so many knives were for.  
She answered "Although cloistered as a nun,  
My adult life has only just begun.  
While I am young, and reasonably fair,  
Such opportunities are far from rare:  
It isn't hard for me to find a wight  
With whom I can arrange to spend a night.  
But 30, 40, 50 years ahead  
I'll find it harder getting men to bed—  
And then I'll dip into my little store  
Of army knives, like these and many more,  
That in my spring and summer may accrue.



There's little boy-scouts aren't prepared to do  
(I'm sure that everyone will understand)  
When offered army knives from Switzerland.

\* \* \*

***Black Smoke, White Smoke***

He likes to hike; he likes to ski;  
He likes to read in bed—like me.  
He likes to climb; he likes to fly;  
He loves canoeing—so do I.  
    He speaks Italian and French  
    Like any Renaissance-Mensch.  
    He's quite an erudite professor,  
    Yet tells the truth to his confessor.  
He loves the poor and working classes;  
He regularly goes to masses  
In praise of Heav'n and fear of Hell—  
And so do people here as well.  
    There's just one thing that I forgot;  
    He's now the Pope—and I am not,  
    Though I am just as good and  
        humble.  
    (Well, that's the way the cookies  
        crumble!)

\* \* \*

***Lamentations 1, 12***

To put it squarely on the line,  
There is no grief as deep as mine.  
If I'm not reconciled in time,  
Then none will be so sad as I'm.  
  
O passers-by, look now and see:  
There's none more sorrowful than me  
(Or none more sorrowful than I)  
Except, perhaps, the passers-by.

*Accommodation—a Carol*

“No room, no room!” the agents said.  
“You should have booked some weeks ahead.  
According to the tourists’ guide,  
We’re always full at Christmastide.”

The infant quickened in the womb,  
Yet still the agents said “No room!”  
There were no vacancies at all  
Except in someone’s ox’s stall.

And there, foretold and yet forlorn,  
The Saviour of the World was born,  
For there was shelter, after all,  
In someone’s humble ox’s stall.

The oxen left some fragrant hay  
Whereon the Virgin Mother lay;  
And it was really God for whom  
The beasts had made a little room.

***For a Sarcophagus***

When I die, then weigh my heart  
    With my faculties together.  
Weigh my science with my art:  
    Set them all against a feather.

When I cross the last black river  
    To the lands beyond the Nile,  
Weigh my worries with my liver:  
    Set my woes against a smile.

When I pass to ever after,  
    Shed upon the golden scales  
Tears of woe and tears of laughter;  
    Oxen eyes and asses' tails.

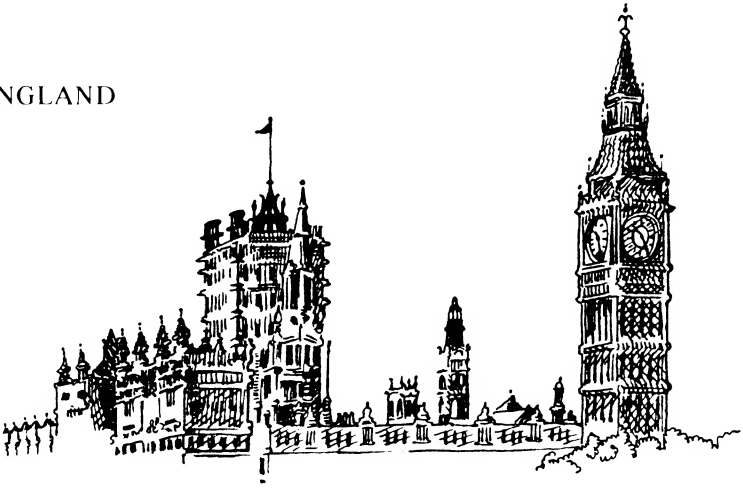
Let me join the souls of Horus  
    In a transcendental song,  
Or some parabolic chorus  
    Counterpointing right with wrong.

As I go, then let my singing  
    Echo canons from above  
In a scale of silence, ringing  
    Round the feather of a dove.

\* \* \*



## ENGLAND



### *Thoughts on Picking My Way Across London*

Earth hath not anything to show more foul.  
Dull must they be of nose, who tolerate  
The foetid faeces by the garden gate,  
Dispensed by unrestrained canine bowel.

Now more and more our streets seem doomed to bear  
The excrements of animals, untrained,  
Upon the paving-stones. Since last it rained,  
Unsullied paths have grown increasing rare.

Let those who love their pets—a current fad—  
Love no less decently their fellow men,  
And let our urban ways be clean again.  
A turd by other name would smell as bad.

The dirty dogs now let us all condemn,  
Together with that antisocial band  
Of owners from whose hounds these troubles stem.  
We venerate the ground on which we stand,  
So let us have a clean Jerusalem  
In what was England's green and pleasant land.

### ***View From the Backs of Kings***

The college yawns beside the Cam  
Where scholars browse and students cram  
Or chew the cud beneath the spires  
Of academic Gothic byres.  
Across the swards beyond the ditch  
They join the gay, bucolic rich  
While dusty leaves, in tome on tome,  
Like dusty roads, turn all to Rome.  
Tall, navish arches of old trees  
(Grass-willows over mulberries,  
As yet uncut for cricket-bats)  
Make shade for little summer gnats  
That smile, as only insects can,  
At man's emphatitute to man.  
Where windrows of sweet stained grass  
Expose the wholly Roman ass  
(For centuries preserved, enshrined,  
In spirits of the cloistered mind)  
We live and die by slow degrees  
Awarded in such fields as these.  
  
The Chapel of the Upturned Sow  
Is sacred to the holy cow.

### ***Epitaph: To Elizabeth \****

Eliza died—a babe forlorn—  
Ere you or I—or she—was born.  
Her days were numbered backwardly  
She died at minus fifty-three.

\*A tombstone in Norwich Cathedral bears the inscription:  
“Elizabeth, born 13 April 1736, died 20 February 1736”

## *A Fantasy of Albion*

There was a toad of London Town, as cheeky as you please,  
Who climbed into the palace grounds with unexpected ease.  
He slithered through the shrubbery and skipped across the green  
And managed to intrude into the chambers of the Queen.

The Prince was in the counting-house, a-counting out his money:  
The groom was in the pantry, eating gingerbread and honey:  
The maid was in the powder-room, a-powdering her nose  
And the guards were in the changing-room, a-changing of their  
hose.

The Queen rang the guard, and the guard rang the sentry,  
Who called to the commissionaire, who rang the palace gong,  
But no-one was concerned about the uninvited entry,  
And nobody was worried—till a copper came along.

He grabbed the fellow's britches and he shook him by the ears;  
He shoved him through the corridors and pushed him through  
the hall.

He rushed him to the quarters of the palace musketeers  
To teach him that intruders are not welcome there at all.

They shackled him with chains to keep him safely through the  
night;

They led him to the Tower by the early morning light.

They dragged him through the dungeons and they flung him on a  
block

And they chopped him into segments like a stick of Brighton  
rock.

The lesson has been taken now. The royal palace grounds  
Are safe from such invaders, being strictly out of bounds  
(Except to royal families and servants of the Prince),  
And nobody's intruded in the palace ever since.

### ***The Intelligence Man***

I'm Boris el-Ballonio, a Foreign Office clerk.  
My manners are inscrutable, my countenance is dark.  
I stand behind the counter in the Gothic Embassy  
And operate with unction, serving Country, God and tea  
While, underneath that counter, I'm a dedicated spy,  
Collecting information for the Agents X and Y.

I go to Gothic parties, where I drink and womanize,  
But under polar glasses I've a pair of beady eyes.  
A perma-press attache, I can write without a trace,  
Employing micro-pencils from my false attache case.  
(My subtle soda-ciphers I occasionally botch  
Because, as double agent, I've a yen for double-Scotch.)

I steal among the alcoves of the Polished Corridor,  
A double double-dealer for an arm of MI-4.  
I shadow shadow-ministers, especially the Prime,  
To note their daily movements, or observe them marking time.  
I follow them in marketing, recording what they buy,  
Condensing the statistics in the dotting of an "i".

My attitude is formal and my protocol's correct.  
My loyalties are mutable, and subject to defect.  
Some day maybe I'll transfer to another kind of post,  
To gather information for whoever pays the most.  
I'll sell them privy secrets. (I've already sold my soul.)  
I'm Boris el-Ballonio, the Foreign Office mole.



### ***The Bear and Ragged Staff***

Within "The Bear and Ragged Staff"  
The local gentry stand and quaff  
Or sit and dine on tasty fare  
Served by "The Ragged Staff and Bear."  
The lowest lintel of the house  
Bears this injunction: "Duck or grouse"  
To warn of bumps and painful luck  
For those who fail to bow or duck;  
But those who stoop will feel no pain  
And have no reason to complain:  
So dine at ease, and eat your fill  
In B.R.S. on Cumnor Hill.

\* \* \*

### ***A.G.M.***

There is a meadow, by St. Clements' Lane,  
Bedewed by mists or scented summer rain,  
Where fools disport and scholars lightly tread  
And greyhounds, neatly groomed and better bred  
(Part-dog, part-arrow), lithe with satin'd springs,  
Bounding as if equipped with avian wings,  
Race on a course of fescue-grass and bent,  
While angels hover in the firmament...  
A fancied scene of verdant yesterdays  
In gay angelic greens and canine greys.

Sweet Isis flows; chill tempests blow in vain:  
Angel and Greyhound Meadow, by the Plain.

### *In the Faculty Club Lounge*

He totters to his chair, an aged don  
Whom critics, in their time, once scowled upon.  
On issues past, his fantasies and state  
Were subjects of derision and debate...  
But now, no more.

Subsiding in his seat  
He takes the weight of ages off his feet.  
His spectacles slip wryly from his nose.  
He turns from retrospection to repose,  
And contemplates his fellows from a haze  
Of old cigars and even older baize.  
His effigy, in marble and in bronze,  
Unrecognized by later crops of dons,  
Discreetly gathers dust beside the stairs,  
And, from that landing too, surveys his heirs  
Who used his textbooks once, though now no more  
Except to prop an argument, or door.  
They know him only, in this latter age,  
By petty footnotes on a yellowed page.  
His faculties and focus all but gone,  
He daily, dimly, donly dodders on.

\* \* \*

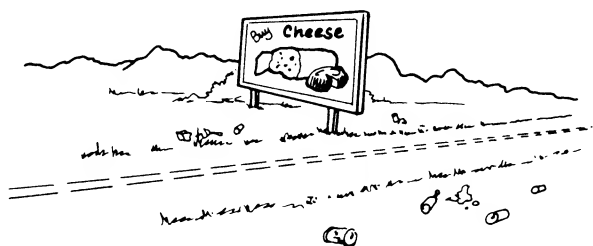
***“The Severn Boar” at Ten***

Red balls, white balls, no balls at all:  
The spot is in a pocket and the Q’s against the wall.  
The cannons now are silent, and the silence cushions on.  
The Q’s are in the corner and the P’s go down the john.  
They flow into the river, over weirs and over falls  
Among the rolling hills again, beside the rolling balls.  
They flush across the marshes and they rush into the seas—  
A million mixing waters with a pod of potted P’s.

Behind the little tavern, where the P’s went on the wall,  
The plots began to thicken, though no Q’s were there at all.  
But now the game is over, all the characters have gone;  
The chalk is by the mantel, where the candles gutter on.  
The barrels have been emptied, leaving nothing but the lees,  
And all the ruddy alcohol has gone to making P’s.  
Pale ale, dark ale, before the final call—  
Red wine, white wine, and no-one left at all.

Time, gentlemen, P’s.





AMERICA

### *Color Me Butter Yellow*

This is Mary Elizabeth Jane.

This is the milk that Mary Jane  
Milked from the cattle on Texas Plain  
And took in a pail to refill the churn  
That had to be trucked into Brattleburn  
From Kerry Farm.

And this is the butter and this the cheese  
They packed into barrels in quantities  
And sent in the vans of the dairy trains  
That rattled across the prairie plains  
To Randallstown.

This is the timber that made the vats  
Secure from predation by mice and rats,  
With staves and bars, under ice and salts,  
Refrigerated in storage vaults  
In measureless caverns concealed from Man  
According to some inscrutable plan  
In Washington.

Three million tons of this frozen cheese,  
At minus forty-seven degrees,  
Is hoarded in caves by the farmers' ghosts  
To spread on their hungry descendents' toasts  
By grandchildren of that Mary Jane  
In cities spawned on the Texas Plain  
Where once stood Kerry Farm.

*On Capitol Hill, the Day After Southey*

It was a summer evening,  
Old Caspar's work was done.  
The Senate's blasted, blackened doors  
Still smouldered in the sun;  
And by him lay, beside those doors,  
The ten surviving senators.

"Now tell us what 'twas all about"  
Those sad survivors cried.  
"And could we not have done without  
This dreadful genocide?"

"It was the Russians," Caspar told,  
Who wished to get ahead.  
We gave them better than we got"  
The crafty Caspar said.

"We blasted even bigger sites,  
And even more are dead.  
Our armed superiority  
Has granted us the victory."

"But what exactly was the cause  
And all the missiles for?  
Could you not tell us why we got  
Into this horrid war?"

"Why, that I cannot say" quoth he—  
"But 'twas a famous victory."

### *The Paradox of Democracy*

I generally grumble at  
The Lumpenproletariat.

    The eat and drink, and curse and pray;  
    They sleep by night and watch by day.

They go to work, they go to sea,  
They revel in depravity—  
    And yet, however much depraved,  
    Humanity is somehow saved.  
They run the show and, truth to tell,  
It functions reasonably well.

I never cease to wonder at  
The Lumpenproletariat.

\* \* \*

### *P.R.*

The front-office black is as cute as you please,  
With fancified hair-do's and satiny knees.  
    She's fairly adept at distributing mails,  
    At answering 'phones and filing (her nails)  
So the first to be hired and the last for the sack  
Is our charming and elegant front-office black.

Her voice is like honey, her eyes are like sloes;  
There's attar-of-roses wherever she goes.  
    She scans the agenda, erases a dot,  
    And notifies us when the coffee is hot.  
Though affirmative action is under attack,  
I've fallen in love with our front-office black.

*America the Beautiful*

'Neath amber skies  
The billboards rise  
    Along the highways wide,  
To block the scenes  
Where evergreens  
    Once clothed the mountainside.

America the beautiful  
    Succumbs to Mammon's plan,  
And flip-top cans  
Bespangle man's  
    Indifference to man.

At beauty spots  
The parking lots  
    Extend to either hand,  
While o'er the plains  
The gravy trains  
    Pollute the plundered land.

With buggy tracks,  
Like income tax,  
    From shore to oily shore,  
America,  
America  
    Is beautiful no more.

The buck that stops  
On mountain tops  
    Is likely to be shot.  
(The gentle doe  
That hides below  
    Is, too—as like as not.)



The fields are free  
For DDT  
And sticks, and bleaching bones.  
The land that was  
America  
Has gone to Davy Jones.

\* \* \*

*Hymn for the Table at Thanksgiving*

Supported by your helping hand,  
They sowed and reaped, and so contrived  
To wrest a living from the land.  
Miraculously, they survived.

And we, who sit before this board,  
Extend our gratitude again  
To you, who shelter us, O Lord,  
From peril, pestilence, and pain;

Who nurture all of us that live  
Beneath these grey November skies;  
Who cherish, educate, forgive,  
And bless our mortal enterprise;

Who raise the harvest from the dirt  
And succor us from need thereby—  
From hunger, hurricane, and hurt,  
And having to eat pumpkin pie.

*Carol—Christmas 1986*

Ron the President looked out  
O'er his noble nation,  
Seeing Commies all about  
Deep in conspiracy.

Ronald Reagan then called forth  
From his office casement:  
"Bring me Colonel Ollie North  
From the White House basement."

"Hither, Ollie, stand by me.  
In our new incursions,  
We must surreptitiously  
Help the honest Persians.

"Let us sell them bombs, perhaps,  
In some secret sessions  
But don't let the other chaps  
Know of our transgressions."

"Sorry, Ronnie" Ollie said,  
With a tremor tearful,  
"Though one's better dead than red,  
I'm a trifle fearful."

"Fear not, Ollie" Ron replied,  
"History has shown us  
Helping war, on either side,  
Brings a massive bonus."

"Sell them guns and planes and stuff,  
Even if out-dated.  
If we only sell enough,  
They'll be extirpated."

“OK, Ronnie,” North agreed,

“Though we may regret it,  
I’ll arrange the dirty deed.

You can just forget it.”

Therefore, Christians, be like North:

Keep the nation guessing.

Take the Fifth, while looking forth

With your boss’s blessing.

\* \* \*

### ***Lullaby For a Veep***

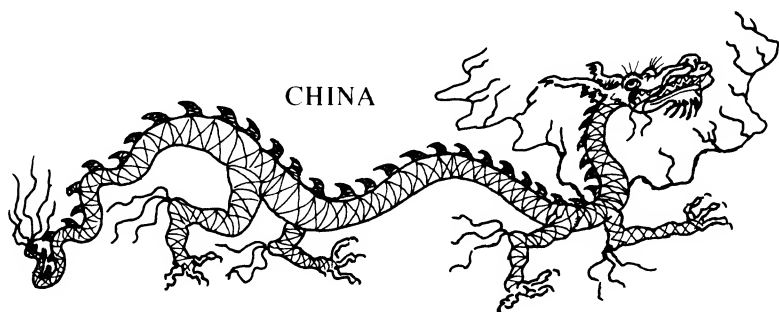
Sing with me  
A veep's little lullaby  
In case there should ever be  
A fun'ral in Paraguay.

Hum along  
By bridges and swimming pools  
A vice-presidential song  
For opening Sunday schools.

Blow your horn—  
Your hollowest melody—  
For blessing the harvest corn  
(Political apogee).

Mumble on:  
Inaugurate county fairs  
Or open a marathon  
With vice-presidential prayers.

Pray with me  
When dollars and wells go dry:  
Perhaps there won't ever be  
A fun'ral in Paraguay.



### ***Chinese New Year Song***

On the first day of New Year, my *ai-ren* sent to me:  
a mouse in a mulberry tree.

On the second day of New Year, my *ai-ren* sent to me:  
two Jersey bulls and a mouse in a mulberry tree.

On the third day of New Year, my *ai-ren* sent to me:  
three tiger cubs, two Jersey bulls, and a mouse in a mulberry  
tree. ... (etc.)

On the twelfth day of New Year, my *ai-ren* sent to me:  
twelve pigs a-grunting  
eleven dogs a-hunting  
ten cocks a-crowing (*cock-a-doodle-doo-oo!*)  
nine monkeys miming  
eight goats a-climbing  
seven horses leaping  
six serpents creeping  
five dragons winged ...  
four March hares  
three tiger cubs  
two Jersey bulls  
and a mouse in a mulberry tree.

### *On Seeking Greener Pastures*

The noble emperor, Bau Wei  
Had diamonds and jade to spare.  
He ruled a land in far Cathay  
With palaces from here to there.  
And when his empress grew too old  
For pleasures in the royal bed,  
He left her side—so we are told—  
And took a concubine instead.

\* \* \*

Across the lands and oceans wide,  
On hills of lavender and pine,  
The baron Hannes occupied  
A row of castles on the Rhine.  
And when his baroness declined  
The better things of private life,  
He left her side and went to find  
A younger and more vital wife.

\* \* \*

So long ago, so far apart—  
In China or beside the Rhine—  
In matters of the flesh and heart,  
Their histories were much like mine.

*Seen From the Shanghai Train*

Along the low embankment  
Among the sooty signs,  
He tends his dusty charges,  
The shepherd of the lines.

Below the tarry sleepers  
Where none but nettles sleep,  
He watches over nature  
And little flocks of sheep.

Undaunted by expresses,  
Untrammelled by the trams,  
His pastoral existence  
Revolves around his lambs.

Expresses thunder northbound  
And Pullmans rumble south,  
But he is trained to patience  
And life from hand to mouth.

Below the path of cinders  
Where levelled track declines,  
He wards a rubble pasture—  
The shepherd of the lines.

*Liu and I*

To see the Gwansi countryside  
I come with comrade Liu—  
A trusted friend and learned guide—  
To contemplate the view.

The day is relatively fine.  
We stand on common stone.  
Her name is much the same as mine,  
Though with another tone.

Upon a steeped peak we stand,  
The other Liu and I,  
Where Gweilin fingers from the land  
Meet cloudbanks from the sky.

And, from a Gweilin mountainside,  
We watch the streams below  
Where trees embrace, and houses hide,  
And boats ply to and fro'.

For East and West again are one,  
And all mankind is kin.  
We stand beneath our common sun  
On mountains at Gweilin.



*An Evening by the Huang-he-lou*

The Yang-tze River, deep and slow,  
That flows beside the Huang-he-lou  
Has far to come, and far to go,

    To reach the Yellow Sea;  
And, in the waning light of day,  
When sunset glow gives way to grey,  
We put our mortal cares away  
    And sit beneath a tree.

Migrating cranes, in languid flight,  
Draw chevrons in the evening light  
And disappear into the night  
    Of dim posterity;  
But still the sounds of passing wings  
Remain, remembered echoings,  
And peasants, paupers, fools, and kings  
    Are stirred to poetry.

The Huang-he-lou is not so high—  
It reaches vainly to the sky—  
But bard Li Bai, and even I,  
    Can sense its dignity;  
And, as the city lanterns glow,  
We sing of currents far below:  
The roiling yellow floods that flow  
    To join the Yellow Sea.

### *Heptameters Inscribed on China*

- Tourists*            Standing, somewhat helplessly,  
                            Gathered in a little group—  
                            Less like fishes in the sea,  
                            More like noodles in a soup.
- Cranes across the sky*    Cranes that fly across the land—  
                            One by day and two by night—  
                            Soar above the cranes that stand  
                            On a city building site.
- Flowers*            Snowy waterfalls, that bloom  
                            On the little cherry tree,  
                            Cannot rival the perfume  
                            Of the jasmine in my tea.
- Watching a Country Dance*    Graceful ladies, picking tea,  
                            Weave the branches for a wreath.  
                            Dancing ladies smile at me.  
                            Smiling back, I pick my teeth.
- Swallows' Nests*       Swallows, winging from the East,  
                            Meet a swallow from the West  
                            Seeking mud to make a nest.  
                            (Mud will do, but spit is best.)
- Water Scenes*       Weeping willows; summer rain;  
                            Streams across the country maps;  
                            Puddles by a flooded drain—  
                            And, of course, the dripping taps.

*Street Sweepings*      Masked and gloved, she stoops and sweeps  
    Peels and litter on the road  
    Into tidy little heaps  
    For a later barrow-load.  
    Leaves join litter in the breeze—  
    Man's no messier than trees.

*Chopsticks*      Love, like chopsticks, needs but two;  
    Three's too many, one's too few.

*Slogan*      To celebrate our final day,  
    We went downtown to drink and dine—  
    And in the morning, cool and grey:  
    "Long live the Party," said the sign.

*Zebra Crossing*      They asked him what he thought about  
    The zebras in the Zoo.  
    He answered that, with little doubt,  
    They were ma-ma, hu-hu.

*For Reflection*      "Mirror, mirror on the wall,  
    Tell me, as a simple fact,  
    Am I fairest of them all?"  
    ...  
    Wordlessly, the mirror cracked.



## OTHER NATIONS

### *Other Nations, Other Ways*

Whatsoever ails your land,  
Unforeseen or underplanned,  
Everywhere the cry's the same:  
U.S.A. must take the blame.

Have you insufficient arms  
For dispelling war's alarms,  
For attack or defense?  
Blame our lack of influence!

Is your populace distraught,  
Underfed or overwrought?  
If they then resort to force,  
Blame America, of course!

Does your president or king  
Mope and pine, or dance and sing?  
Stay at home, or go away?  
Blame it on the U.S.A.

Does he hustle into jail  
All the candidates that fail?  
Does he let the felons free?  
Bomb the U.S. embassy!

If at times we may have played  
Helping roles with foreign aid,  
Never think a word of thanks:  
Take the cash, and blame the Yanks!

Were you smitten by a flood?  
Are your cities steeped in blood?  
Do your waters freeze or foam?  
Blame the Yanks, and send them home!

Never mind what ails the land—  
Act of God or rebel band—  
Let the Devil have his day  
And blame it on the U.S.A.

\* \* \*

### *Wasserklosett*

The ancient robbers of the Rhine  
Demand no more illegal tolls.  
In fort or ferry, rain or fine,  
They ply new predatory roles.  
Beside the fragrant Primrose Path  
Where travellers have come and gone,  
Descendants of those Knights of Bath  
Are now the Jackals of the John..  
  
As washroom wardens, night and day,  
They prey on all who come to pee,  
And everyone has now to pay  
A 20-pfennig peeing fee.  
So noble Germans of the West—  
In spite of modern liberty—  
Are still, in this respect, oppressed  
By feudal toiletocracy.

***How We Bring the Good News South,  
from Gdansk and Gdover***

From Poland, where it snows and snows  
And England, where it rains,  
The information traffic goes  
In predetermined lanes.  
Dame Immigration keeps the score  
In vast computer files  
Along the Polish corridor  
And in the British aisles.  
Although dim Baltic amber lights  
Are set to give us pause,  
We pilgrim through the noble nights  
To seek a warmer cause.  
Until the final bugle blows  
To halt our laggard train,  
We travel on from British might  
Towards a Spanish Main.

\* \* \*

***Mystery***

I asked them in the 'buses and I asked them in the trains.  
I asked them up and down the steppes and on the open plains.  
I asked the men in Moscow and I asked the men in Minsk—  
What happened to the other half of Semipalatinsk?

### *The Hmong*

Famed for legend and for song  
Are the hminstrels of the Hmong.  
In a hmass, or hmerely single,  
Hmong hmusicians like to hmingle  
Hmodestly among the throngs  
In the hmarkets of the Hmong,  
Telling stories, singing songs  
Of the hmighty deeds of Hmong.  
Since they try to keep in hmind  
Hmoral hmodels of hmankind,  
Hmong hmelodious tradition  
Is a hmine of erudition:  
People chanting tales in Hmong  
Hardly ever get them hrong.

### *I.M.*

She came from just the likes of us—  
    A little gift of God,  
But she moved forward in a 'bus  
    Where none of us had trod.  
She road in stylish gravy trains  
    (Until the last hurrah's).  
She gloried in financial gains  
    And half a hundred bras.  
Where commoners like us were barred,  
    She struck a regal role.  
She smiled upon the palace guard—  
    And bought another stole.  
Her man was puggy-nosed and paunched,  
    But what had she to lose?  
She had a pretty face, that launched  
    A thousand pairs of shoes.



### *The Sultan and the Princess*

The Sultan of Swat had an Arabic yen  
For the Palatine Princess of Pa.  
He besought her in marriage, again and again,  
But the Palatine Princess, oblivious of men,  
Would only say “g” (she declined to say “ya”)  
As she clung to her aging mama.  
The Sultan implored her in Danish and Dutch:  
He pleaded in Swedish and Swatch.  
He pressed his best suit when he asked for her hand  
But the Palatine Princess did not understand,  
And he couldn’t advance it a notch.  
The Sultan set off for the Kingdom of Pa  
And applied at the Palatine gates;  
But the Princess said nought, or she counted to ten,  
Rejecting his overtures over again  
And declining his offers of dates.  
The Sultan considered presenting his case  
In the erudite language of Pa,  
But its grammar is odd and its spelling is strange;  
Its tenses and tones have a terrible range,  
And he couldn’t tell “Oh” from an “Ah.”  
So he dropped his mock-Danish, dismantled his Dutch,  
And he tried Esperanto instead—  
And the Princess of Pa, saying “Ta very much,”  
Accepted his suit, and she took it as such  
With a nod of her Palatine head.  
Then the Princess of Pa took her leave of mama.  
She married the Sultan of Swat,  
And agreed to embark from the Palatine Ark  
For a cruise in the Sultanate yacht.  
And now the Celestial Sultana of Swat,  
In a silk ceremonial dress,  
Sails from starboard to port as the Queen of the Court,  
Since she chose to say, graciously, “Jes!”

### *The Sultan of Oman*

When the Sultan isn't busy ruling Oman—ruling Oman—  
Or engaged in simple play or honest oil—honest toil—  
The he loves to join the sybaritic Roman—-ritic Roman—  
And listen to the gurgle of the oil—of the oil.  
He's adept at guessing Soviet intentions—-et intentions—  
When his diplomatic duty's to be done—to be done—  
And he doesn't relish foreign interventions—interventions—  
O, a Sultan's life is not a simple one—simple one.

When the Sultan isn't driving his Mercedes—his Mercedes—  
Or directing from his diplomatic helm—matic helm—  
Then he likes to mix with gentlemen and ladies—men and  
ladies—  
And the ordinary mortals of his realm—of his realm.  
He would rather drive a Porsche than an Audi—than an Audi—  
And he'd rather have more butter than a gun—than a gun—  
So, in view of all the problems with the Saudi—with the Saudi—  
O, a Sultan's life is not a simple one—a simple one.



***Opec All You Faithful***

On the First Day of Ramadan my true love gave to me  
An oil-well beside a palm tree.

On the Second Day of Ramadan my true love gave to me  
Two silver Rolls, and an oil-well beside a palm tree.

On the Third Day ...  
Three gold Cadillacs

On the Fourth day ...  
Four condominiums  
Five Mercedes-Benz  
Six sacks of rubies  
Seven camels leaping  
Eight spies a-creeping  
Nine sheiks a-shaking  
Ten steaks a-baking

...

(On the remaining 20 days of Ramadan my true love went off  
in one of his yachts with one of his other friends ...)

## *Cargoes*

Rule, Liberia—Liberia rules the waves.  
There's no-one so free as we liberated slaves.  
    In calm or breeze in all degrees  
    And varied water motions  
We claim the freedom of the seas  
    On all the briny oceans.

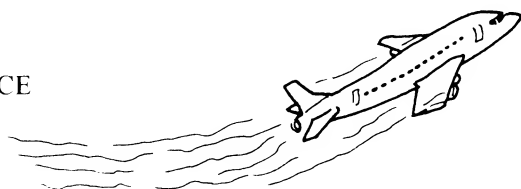
If you want to ship turkeys to Turkey,  
    Or guns to a sheik or a shah,  
Then charter a freighter  
And, sooner or later,  
    They'll sail under Flag Panama.

Three cheers for the queens of the ocean—  
    Three cheers and a hip-hip-hoorah!  
Sign up for a trip  
On a capital ship  
    Under charter to Flag Panama.

So ...  
If you've an honest broker  
    And a fairly honest banker,  
Then rent a ship  
To take a trip—  
    A freighter or a tanker—  
To cart your spoils, or beers, or oils,  
In jars or bags, beneath the flags  
    Of fair Liberia.

If you've a crop of grass or pop  
    For ready sale or barter,  
Then ship your wares  
At cut-rate fares  
    On a Panamanian charter.  
At lower prices, when even Jesus saves,  
Fair Liberians never shall be slaves.

## FLIGHTS INTO SPACE



### *Flight Take-off*

I'm all set for take-off. I'm ready to fly,  
To square the Great Circle with  $\pi$  in the sky.  
My nose has been powdered. My tresses are permed.  
My seating consignment is over-confirmed.  
My hat and my coat, in an oversized pack,  
Are cosily stowed in the overhead rack.  
My hurry-on luggage sits under my feet.  
My belt is tight-buckled, and upright my seat.

We three in row seven are gathered together  
To glide under rainbows or over the weather.  
We smile at each other. We stifle a cough.  
We swallow a pill, and prepare to take off—  
But all the ground coffee and ground personnel  
Can't settle accounts and my stomach as well.

\* \* \*

### *Distaff and Shuttle*

There's little curvature in sight—  
Less oxygen in space.  
Twins, parting at the speed of light,  
Outreach the human race.

No shadows dim the vaulted sky;  
No showers damp the sea.  
There is no end in sight for  $\pi$ ,  
Nor sag at zero-g.

### *Airborne*

Come with us a-jumbo-jetting:  
Fly with us to distant parts.  
Travel wisely, not forgetting  
Foreign foods and foreign arts.

Lose no time, and lose no glasses;  
Treasure travel-agents' notes;  
Let's not lose our boarding passes  
In the pockets of our coats.

Girt with safety belt and buckles—  
Seatback table stashed away—  
We may sit and gnaw our knuckles,  
Dream, or doze, or sit and pray.

Through the clouds and over oceans—  
Through the upper atmosphere—  
Fragrant with sweet toilet lotions  
From the washrooms in the rear.

In our lunch tray's plastic gutter  
Toothpicks soak with wayward peas,  
And a pat of melted butter  
Slips unnoted to our knees.

Facial tissues, moist and scented,  
Find their way into our tea,  
While the earphones, duly rented,  
Offer rock or symphony.

As the prerecorded choirs  
Drown the flutter of our hearts,  
Here we go, the frequent fliers,  
Jetting off to distant parts.

## ***It All Depends on One's Attitude***

*Introduction*    The N.A.S.A. has a solemn mission  
                    To aid the erring human race  
                    By using rocket force or fission  
                    To do experiments in space.  
                    There's also Women's Liberation  
                    That has, among its vital goals,  
                    To free all women from submission  
                    That may oppress their female souls.

*The problem*    In normal mission'ry position,  
                    The man lies prone upon the dame,  
                    Thus subjugating her condition  
                    (Or so the Women's Libbers claim)  
                    Because in copulat'ry action,  
                    It's her unenviable fate  
                    To try achieving satisfaction  
                    Beneath her male companion's weight.

*Method*        So we propose a small improvement  
                    For lightening her mortal load,  
                    Allowing intercoursal movement  
                    By mating in a better mode,  
                    And we've conceived this small petition,  
                    Submitted by my spouse and me,  
                    To practice orbital coition  
                    Way out in space at zero-g.

*Summary*      With ministerial permission,  
                    Repectfully we wish to try  
                    To use the mission'ry position  
                    And do it lightly in the sky.

\* \* \*

## ***The Wanderers***

As Voyagers orbit in Jupiter's glow  
The refugees trudge in the highways below.  
    They follow a path by crumbling wall---  
    And the red spot of Jupiter watches it all.

From blood and from sorrow, through dust and through dung,  
From Mimot to Korat to Molu and Strung,  
    The bullock carts creak as they trundle along---  
    But the song of the spheres is an echoing song.

The voice of Callisto sets comets astir,  
But nobody sings in the lands of the Khmer.  
    Europa and Ganymede start at the call---  
    And the watcher of Io is watching it all.

With rocket computers we reach for the stars,  
Bedevilled by fate and the red eyes of Mars:  
    But where do they fit in the overall plan  
    That matters so much—or so little—to Man?

\* \* \*

## ***Orbits***

The sun sets daily in the west  
    (Or seems to, due to world rotation),  
Reducing light, and bringing rest,  
    By periodic occidation.

The moon revolves in an ellipse  
    Around our earthly domesticity,  
Obliging us to come to grips  
    With semilunar eccentricity.



### ***Eccentric Orbits***

The ellipse of the Moon is a kilo of brie—

Its  $x$  somewhat less than its  $y$ .

Its path is a steady  $dV$  upon  $t$

In the form of a  $\pi$  in the sky.

The Man in the Moon became old very soon,

And smarter appreciably later.

His body grew old and his skin became cold

And he wrinkled from crater to crater.

The glimmer of Mars is agleam with the stars,

But his rays have a bloodier tinge.

His face bears the score of the craters of war

And the light of the lunatic fringe.

\* \* \*

### ***Noises OPH\****

A cloud of interstellar dust (so claims a learned prof.)

Obscures the ray that comes our way from distant  $\alpha$ OPH.

It may be moderately dense, though of a modest mass.

Some have avowed it is a cloud of interstellar gas,

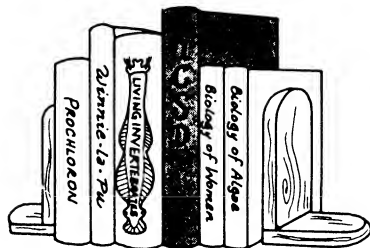
Evolved, perhaps, not long ago. It seems both cool and grey—

A spot of shade that tends to fade beside the Milky Way.

\*See: Paresce, F. Structure of the local interstellar medium and the line of sight to  $\alpha$ OPH. *Nature* **302**, 806 (1983).



## ACADEME AND MISCELLANEA



### *U.C.S.D.*

(The tune could be that of Pooh Bah's  
*As in a month you have to die ...*)

Some places have an acronym

Like suny, cal, and mit.

They're good to shout: you spell them out—

The letters seem to fit.

But by some sad perversity

We're clearly out of luckst:

Our noble university

Abbreviates to *ucsd*.

We come to study chemistry

Or do phys. ed. or bio.

Or even oceanography

Here by the sea at sio.

But it looks silly on our cars,

And sillier on truckst

If we, without particulars,

Inscribe them simply *ucsd*.

We'd like a neat appellative

Like joides, say, or bart.,

To stand for where we work and live,

In science or in art;

But now, with feelings somewhat mixed,

I think that we are stuckst:

Our acronym's been firmly fixed:

Our institution's *ucsd*.

Yet, though our rhyme's peculiar

And sounds a trifle loony,

In scholarship we're better far

Than mit or cal or suny.

I can't see where we go from here,

So now I'll pass the buckst

To people in some future sphere

At sio or at *ucsd*.

### ***College Bookstore***

Beer mugs, T-shirts, calculators, keys:  
College-lover's note-book covers—dossiers for degrees:  
Pocket lenses, ball-point pens, picture-frames and hooks—  
And books, books, books, books, books,  
    books, books, books!

Let Harvard have her tailored suits, her gold-encrusted pots,  
Her hand-embellished riding boots, her rocking-chairs and  
    yachts.  
We've clips and clamps and reading lamps (*PRO LIBRIS FIAT LUX*)  
And miles and miles of groaning aisles of books, books,  
    books, books, books!

### ***Approximation***

Ours was a distant friendship, at the start—  
An ocean and a continent apart.  
    I wrote, and so did you.  
Then, wafted by the vagaries of fate,  
And separated by a single state  
    (Or maybe even two)  
You moved, and so the distances came down.  
You took a job, much nearer to my town;  
    And sometimes we would 'phone.  
It was a year or more since first we met.  
The nights so long, seemed even longer yet  
    When I remained alone.  
At times you stayed. We drew a shady line,  
With only walls between your arms and mine.  
    And now, at this address,  
We lie together, parted by no wall:  
The thickness of a night-dress, that is all—  
    Or, often, even less.

## *Lord Chancellor's Song*

(After W.S. Gilbert)

Our University, system-wide,  
Has this most inconvenient side:  
    Though pledged to practice democracy,  
    It's quite unfair to the likes of me.

The University, where I reign,  
Is egalitarian (in the main):  
    Its rules are just (or ought to be)  
    For everybody—excepting me.  
A trying situation for  
An intellectual chancellor.

Ad hoc committees, who strive to guide,  
Present their findings on every side,  
    Submitting their bland reports to me  
    And recommending unanimously ...  
From the noblest dean to the meanest prof,  
I sign them on (or I lay them off):  
    Step one to two, step two to three—  
    But nobody does the same for me.  
It's really most frustrating for  
A fairly acceptable chancellor.

And candidates who obtain degrees  
From bachelors to their PhDs  
    Receive certificates, which I sign—  
    But no-one's entitled to sign on mine.  
For a sheepskin black or a sheepskin fair—  
From any department—I don't much care—  
I'd pay them a regraduation fee,  
    But there's never a suitable one for me,  
Which is exasperating for  
An ex-professional chancellor.

### *Orlando's Choice*

If music be the food of love, play on!  
If not, be silent, fiddler: be gone!  
We cannot feed sweet airs to hungry troops  
Or make the Tales of Hoffmann into soups.  
Such combinations might be worth a try —  
A piece of music with a piece of pie —  
But people cannot live by airs alone;  
We need some sustenance as well as tone.  
  
So judge us hungry mortals not too crude  
Who season food of love with love of food.

\* \* \*

### *Fragment (after Spenser)*

They shouted his illustrious name  
From far Olympus to the sea  
When Helios to Athens came  
To woo the fair Asilone.

Antigone then wept alone,  
For Polyos advised that she  
Should seek seclusion, and atone  
In distant Dimethicone.

Great graven images of jade,  
Black marble and chalcedony.  
Commemorate that Attic maid—  
Ill-fated young Asilone.

### ***Sigh No More Ladies***

A petticoat Diogenes,  
She roves around the camp,  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees —  
The Lady of the Lamp.

An Iron Maiden, Joan of Arc,  
Was martyred at the stake.  
The nannies of St. James's Park  
Were Ladies of the Lake.

The Lady Jane, who lost her head —  
As Windermere her fan;  
Godiva, who — but barely wed —  
Rode bravely in the van.

A punter at the shallow end —  
The Lady of Shallot.  
The French lieutenant's lady-friend  
Did — or perhaps did not.

Are there such noble dames today  
As ladies were of yore?  
Dame Fortune frowned on such as they  
So, ladies, sigh no more.

\* \* \*

### ***Brrr - Brrr - Brrr***

All of our agents are busy.  
No-one can come to the phone.  
But please do not get in a tizzy.  
Or gripe at our occupied tone.  
(I'm not playing hookey or sleeping:  
I'm sitting outside for a tan.)  
Please bear with our bells and our beeping;  
We'll answer as soon as we can.

### ***Skinny Ginnies***

Smoking Skinny Ginnies, girls,  
Is one of women's rights.  
You're free to choose, chew gum, or booze,  
And sleep around at nights.

You've come a long way, Baby.  
You've certainly come far.  
You're fragrant as a kipper  
And your kisses taste like tar.

A girl who smokes, tells dirty jokes,  
And coughs through half the nights,  
Is exercising sooty lungs  
Along with human rights.

Feel free to use a pack or two —  
Or six or seven, maybe.  
A woman who pollutes the air  
Has come a long way, Baby!

You don't wear bib-and-tucker now —  
Not even mini-bib —  
And smoking Skinny Ginnies  
Is a sign of Women's Lib.

Black socks today are quite passé,  
So, too, are bras and pinnies;  
So, come what may, just puff away  
At stinking Skinny Ginnies.



***Sheets (After Keats)***

When to my closet I retire,  
    Illumin'd by the evening star,  
Then minor miracles transpire:  
    My sheets become triangular.

I pull them up around my chin  
    And draw a selvedge to my nose,  
But, in a little, I begin  
    To sense a draught around my toes.

And when I struggle to enfold  
    And tuck them down around my feet,  
My shoulders start to feel the cold  
    From insufficiency of sheet.

Then if by fortune I succeed  
    In covering both feet and chin,  
The wily winds of winter lead  
    To frigid hip of chilly shin.

Yet, by the rosy light of dawn,  
    When I examine them with care,  
By sunbeams through the curtains drawn,  
    My sheets are evidently square.

Like blankets and like counterpane.  
    They pass Pythagora's test--  
Four-normal-cornered once again,  
    Rectangular like all the rest.

My sheets appear to be alive.  
    Although their spirits shun the light.  
How otherwise could they contrive  
    To shed a corner in the night?

### ***The Prince of Pees***

When Britain stood in high respect  
As monarch of the seas,  
Whatever commoners suspect,  
Her noblemen did not collect  
Reserves of common pees;

But lately in Los Angeles  
A prince of Belgian line  
Assembled pots of people's pees  
For ultimate analyses  
(For dope or anodyne).

Prince Alexandre de Mérode  
In nineteen eighty-four,  
Amassed a cellarful or lode  
Of samples for his great commode:  
His golden liquor store.

Encrated under lock and key-  
Unspecified by names  
Those litres of athletic pee  
Are bottled for posterity-  
The next Olympic Games.

\* \* \*

### ***Keepers***

Some people keep chickens--  
Keep sniffing--  
Keep slim--  
While others just keep  
Getting stout;  
But though you may seek  
Cash or counsel this week,  
For the present, I beg you,  
*Keep Out!*

### ***Summer Mood***

When the sultry sun is hot  
And the days are dry,  
In the gardens of the land  
Nature takes the upper hand  
And the winds blow by.

When the torrid sun has set  
And the shadows fall,  
In the gardens of the mind  
Nobody expects to find  
Anything at all.

W  
A  
I  
N  
A

*If . . .*

If it sounds like someone beating on a pot—

It's modern music.

If you can't tell if they're tuning up or not—

It's modern music.

If it hasn't any melody and hasn't got a key,

And acts on other people as it tends to act on me

(To make me want to leave the room, to take a snack or pee)---

It's modern music.

If pictures look like accidental spills,

They're modern art.

If people look like pedestals, or pills—

That's modern art.

If nothing seems in focus except dribbles on a screen;

If figures have utensils where their faces should have been

And all that isn't grey is daubed a dirty shade of green---

That's modern art.

If the stanzas have no rhythm and the verses have no rhyme---

It's modern poetry.

If the meanings stagger wildly from the dumb to the sublime---

It's modern poetry.

If many words are dirty and the others are obscure,

Assembled without order like kebabs along a skewer,

And it seems to have no ending (though one can never be sure)

*Yes, Virginia—There Is An Easter Bunny*

What could be that furry thing  
That, at Eastertide,  
Symbolizes rites of Spring  
Through the countryside?

It cannot be hen or rabbit:  
Hens have but two legs,  
Whereas rabbits lack the habit  
Of producing eggs.

There are few exotic creatures  
That create both eggs and milk,  
Thus combining bird-like features  
With mammalian ilk.

Eggs and milk (and maybe cream)  
Are produced, it seems to us,  
Only by a monotreme—  
Ergo—Paschal Platypus!



## CONFERENCES AND EXPEDITIONS

### *E pluribus tedium*

I mumble thanks, or tip my hat—  
My life is full of small conventions;  
In common courtesies like that  
I merit honorable mentions.

But big conventions, I'm afraid,  
Oppress me to be gauche and dour:  
My gentle traits begin to fade,  
And I grow brusquer by the hour.

I soon despair of bonhomie  
And shed my friendliness beguiling.  
I get convention-fellah's knee;  
My zygomatics ache from smiling.

I dread the smoky atmospheres  
Of little rooms in big hotels,  
And all those mediocre beers  
I take to humor petty swells.

I look askance at cheery nods;  
I sidle past the shoulder-patters,  
And thank my everlasting gods  
For bed, the only spot that matters.

I hate this catalog I tote,  
This bold identifying label.  
I long to leave the sinking boat,  
And slip away, when I am able,

To dream of spring and robins' song,  
Of trees and grass, or sea and sail,  
While speakers rumble on too long,  
And microphones and lanterns fail.



### *Forty Yards On*

Forty yards on when, afar and asunder,  
Parted are those who are starting from here,  
Some will look back, and regretfully wonder  
What has become of the faltering rear.  
Then, it may be, there will often come o'er you  
Visions of specimens trampled or missed.  
Slow your advance into prospects before you;  
Pause to fill in a few gaps in your list.

Follow up, follow up, follow up,  
Till the wood rings again and again  
With the tramp of the twenty-two men . . . follow up!

Then it may be that the end of the party,  
Lagging of foot, but in diligence strong,  
Think of the van in its progress so hearty,  
Wonder, perhaps, if their path has been wrong.  
Let us implore the botanical tortoise—  
While you can see where the others have gone,  
Quicken your paces until you have caught us,  
Till we unite again, forty yards on.

Follow up, follow up, follow up,  
Till the wood rings again and again  
With the tramp of the twenty-two men . . . follow up!



*Epitaph for a Phascolarctus*

Somewhere in the leaves up there  
Dozes a koala bear,  
Hidden by the vegetation  
Of his own kohabitation.

In this eucalyptic thicket,  
Girdled by a concrete picket,  
Hidden by transplanted trees  
From the far antipodes

Here he was koeducated,  
Reached maturity, and mated  
With occasional koition  
In the usual position.

Though his friends and korelations  
Gathered round on such occasions,  
None of them seemed much to care  
For the sight they had to bear.

Walled in, yet emancipated;  
Placid; komatose when sated;  
Here he grunted, wheezed and sighed;  
Guzzled, overate, and died;

And—as all must, sooner, later—  
Joined the Great Kooperator  
Up the long koeval stairs  
In the Heaven of the bears.

\* \* \*

In the leafy clouds up there  
Dozes a koala bear,  
Hidden in the vegetation  
Of his last kohabitation.

*Caveat emptor porcellorum*

Behold the noble guineapig,  
    A distant cousin of the rabbit's.  
He has no tail; he's not as big;  
    He lacks his cousin's nasty habits.

He doesn't bite; he has no smell.  
    Consider, too, his ease of feeding.  
His broods may not be large, but—well,  
    He compensates by extra breeding.

He catches all the best diseases  
    From sunny Spain or old Peru  
(Well, *almost* anything that pleases  
    His conquerors—excepting “flu.”)

The British medics, from of old,  
    Have reckoned guineas as their fees;  
Thus jointly interchanged with gold  
    Are cavies and Hippocrates.

How proud, despite his humble lot!  
    How versatile the noble cavy!  
Don't relegate him to the pot  
    Or boil him down to guinea-gravy!

We sit in numbed and serried ranks,  
Immobilized by social laws  
Until the chairman's final thanks  
Are drowned in eddies of applause.

Then mercifully, bleary-eyed,  
And not a little addle-pated,  
We part for homes where we can hide  
Secluded and uncongregated.

And yet, in spite of good intentions,  
I soon shall board a parting plane  
And sally forth to far conventions,  
To suffer sadly once again.

Impelled by dimly hidden springs,  
Obedient to the herding call,  
I leave my old, familiar things  
And go to be conventional.

*The Old Phytologists* \*

Each Saturday, we breathed the special aura  
Of breck or fen, or marshes by the sea.  
We went with raincoat, vasculum, and flora,  
A pencil, notebook, sandwiches, and tea.

Mays came and went; then, in our diaspora,  
Long past Part II—the World was our Part III—  
We travelled far with vasculum and flora,  
With pencil, notebook, sandwiches, and tea.

In Pago Pago, as in Bora Bora,  
In Innsbruck, Invercargill, Innisfree,  
We still took raincoats, vasculum, and flora,  
A pencil, notebook, sandwiches, and tea.

And now, in the committees and the quora  
That drain our patience and our ATP,  
We dream of sunshine, vasculum, and flora,  
Of pencil, notebook, sandwiches, and tea.

\* R. A. L. 1975. In *Humphrey Gilbert-Carter*, edited by  
J. S. L. Gilmour and S. M. Walters. Cambridge.

*Epitaph*

I came to live, I came to love  
    When in the world above,  
Till Death, unmindful of my worth,  
    Consigned me to the earth.  
And now, beneath the teeming sod,  
    I come at last to terms  
Perhaps with all-embracing God,  
    But certainly with worms.

## **APPENDIX**

*Mi estas kompleza al bestoj: nokta epizodo\**

*Kontraŭ vitro nevidata  
Eta neĝopilko batas —  
Mola nokta papilio  
Per la kupra kapo gratas.*

*Ĉesu, kompatinda besto!  
Vi neniam ĝin traboros;  
Nur difektos la okulojn  
Kaj vi certe kapdoloros.*

*Malfermante la fenestron,  
Demetinte la fontplumon,  
Mi enlasas la anĝelon  
Kiu flirtas en la lumon.*

*Kvazaŭ duon-blindigite,  
La tineo fluge maŝas,  
Teksas sur la blanka muro  
Kaj, per flugilado, draŝas*

*Inter surpaperaj floroj;  
Kolizias kun malhela,  
Samaspekta ombruleto  
Sur plafono ŝajnĉiela.*

*Turniĝante al la lampo,  
Ĝi krakigas la surfacon  
De varmega lumigilo,  
Tute ne sentante lacon.*

*Sed, per frenezega flugo,  
Bruliginte la antenojn,  
La malsaĝa best' daŭrigas  
Siajn ŝanceliĝajn penojn.*

*Tia sensingarda ago,  
Post sufiĉe da ripeto,  
Estas certe memmortiga.  
Haltu! Haltu, anĝeleto!*

*Do mi ĉasas la insekton,  
Relasinte la skribadon,  
Klopodante lin allogi  
En gapantan fingrokradon.*

*Jen la inko, elverŝita,  
Nigre fluas sur la paĝon,  
Sed mi kaptas mian gaston  
En sekuran pugnokaĝon.*

*Zorge mi ĝin metas mole  
Sur la sojlon de fenestro,  
Kaj mi tion-ĉi refermas.  
Nun, denove studejestro,*

*Kun kontento mi rigardas  
Kiel, de la trabo randa,  
Griziĝante per vibrado,  
Ĉiam pli kaj pli malgranda,*

*La tineo, ekfluginta  
Animeto de neĝero,  
Brilas en la lumradio —  
Ĝis subita malapero*

*En la buŝon dentoplenan,  
De vespereto de vespero  
Kiu, preterkirliĝante,  
Serĉas manĝon el aero.*

*Kvankam lafluganta muso  
Prenis mian papilion,  
Mi bedaŭras ĝin neniom,  
Ĉar mi faris mian ĉion.*

*Mi, sufiĉe grandanime,  
Amas ĉiun bestan fraton.  
Supozeble la vespereto  
Jes, nuligis la malsaton.*

\* R. A. L. 1959. *Norda Prismo* 1:30.

**\$9.95**     *Lewin: Biology of Algae and Other Diverse Verses*

**About the Author:**

*Ralph A. Lewin* was educated in England, though he now lives in America and teaches biology and carries on research in various aspects of phycology in the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at La Jolla, California. The *New Yorker* published two of his poems, for which he was paid, and a number of others were published elsewhere, for which he was not paid. (Free verse, so to speak.) He was the co-translator, with Ivy Kellerman Reed, of *Winnie-la-Pu*, the definitive Esperanto edition of the classic by Milne.



***Ralph A. Lewin***

This volume contains the verses published under the the title *The Biology of Algae and Other Verses* (which has gone out-of-print) plus an equal number of new poems.